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THE
VERTUE
AND
VALUE
OF
BAPTISM,

In which the

*Dignity and Duty of
The due Right of Infants to
And their right above that of grown persons by } Baptism,
The degrading and destructive Principles and
Practices of*

A R E

Catechetically propounded, plainly Preached, and
now Published as an Antidote against all Baptism-
Despising Dictates.

By *Zach. Crofton*, late Minister at *Botolph Algate*,
London.

London, Printed for *Dorman Newman* at the
Kings-Arms in the Poultry next to Gro-
cers-Ally. 1663.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Church were disperſed, as Sheep without any Shepherd; nay by the *Congregational, Anabaptiſtical* principles and practices, and in order to their ſchismatical *Church-gathering* deſign, you were by *Rude, Ruſt; Fooliſh-wife, and Baptiſm-blaſpheming* *Simpſon*, paganized and proclaimed *Dogs, aliens and ſtrangers to the Commonwealth of Iſrael*; when the zealous importunity of ſome among you, meeting in me with a real pity of your Pagan poſture, did engage me to take of you, as a *Church of Jeſus Chriſt*, the care and charge. I was conſtrained to lay again the Foundations theſe wicked men had razed, and to inform you in the firſt rudiments of *Religion*, and *firſt Ordinances of Worſhip*, that you might underſtand the *dignity and duty of your Baptiſm*; in which I find ſuch dulneſs in common capacity, that the things you heard, you muſt hear again, and indeed *Read* before many will receive them: I being come among you, and (by Gods bleſſing on my *Ministry*) having reduced you into ſome order, convinced ſome perſons of their *Rebaptized vanity*, and parents of the ſinful neglect of their Infants intereſt in the Covenant: have met with violent oppoſition, and malicious interruptions in the work of God: conſtraining me to *Preach unto you the Goſpel of Truth through much contention*; wherein yet through grace I have waxed bold. You are manifeſt Witneſſes that the Anabaptiſts will *baptiſe with fire and fury*, ſuch as they cannot *baptiſe with water* in the way of their folly: By what clamours have they clouded my name (repreſenting me uncivil, whilſt for fear of the Law they durſt not render me prophane) how they have by falſe ſur-
mizes

The Epistle Dedicatory.

mizes prejudiced present powers, by false accusations, palpable perjury, extrajudicial Process, partial and prejudiced Judges (of their own picking) and implacable fury darkened my credit, weakened my Ministry, disturbed my peace, and endeavoured to stop my mouth; you and all the Churches of God cannot but know. The guilt and odium, whereof you have taken from your selves by your seasonable Attestation to my *Innocency*, and serious protest against their groundless cruelty, wherein I bless God I can rejoyce, *It is the cause that makes the Martyr*, and what is the cause of all that calamity they have to me created; Let the *fretting of their spirits*, when your Pulpit sounded the *Sacrament of baptism is to be administered*; your Reverend attendance on that Ordinance is desired: their railing speeches on all occasions uttered against *Infant-baptism*, their *invective Letters* to me written, (which I keep as Monuments of their folly and malice) their often struggling to set up *Oats, Knowls, Lamb, Simpson*, to blaspheme Gods Ordinances; and at last the violent and unjust intrusion of *John Simpson* into the *baptismal* Season of the Sabbath, to the excluding of that Ordinance, and vilifying the same in the sight of the people, and that not onely in its *subjects*, but in it *self*, openly teaching *baptism is no ground of Communion with the Church visible*; witness to all the world, if I suffer as an evil doer; whose Ox or Ass have I taken? what Law have I violated? whom did I injure in word or deed? How often have I sought for competent impartial Judges, that might convict me? and proposed ways of accommodation: admitted them; when sought by my

The Epistle Dedicatory.

enemies, whose Return hath been, *we will have no peace, no agreement, no arbitration*: nay, my enemies being Judges, the ground of their quarrel and enmity, is my endeavours to return you into order; and their cry is, *He will not let Simpson preach*: So that because I will not suffer *that woman* Jezabel to teach and seduce the Lords people, I must be loaded with calumny, and followed with vexation: Well be it so, I will bless God for supporting, and wait on him for saving mercy; and pray that you may be the more confident in the truths confirmed by my sufferings, wherein you also have born your share: I cannot but observe how Heretical Malice hath trampled on your *dignities* and *gravities* by military insolency and vulgar rudeness, yet hath God hitherto given your hearts to adhere to me, and the truths by me witnessed. Whilst you have owned my Ministry, under so great a *Fight of affliction*, I cannot but hope you will do it still, and be more confirmed in the *vertue and value of your received Baptism*, both which are here plainly and practically propounded to your view. Many eminent men have most fully debated the Controversie, and defended your *Infants right to baptism*, but of their labours, I observe the vulgar make little use; for *Practical conviction of sin*, I find to be the best *consutation of error*, and have therefore attempted it in the ensuing Treatise for its stile and method, suited to vulgar capacity; receive it as a token of my true affection to your souls, and Gods holy Ordinances, read it as the direction of your duty, learn by it to prize Baptism, as the high priviledges of you and yours; and in doing and suffering, shew forth.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

forth the *virtue and value* of the Covenant of God on your flesh, living as Baptized into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to which end you may be assured as of the endeavours, so the earnest prayers of,

Your greatly reproached and persecuted, but yet really innocent, and resolved zealous Pastor,

ZACH. CROFTON.

TO

FOR THE USE OF THE
 CHURCH OF ENGLAND
 IN THE CITY OF LONDON

TO THE READER.

Courteous Reader.



HO U canst not be such a stranger in our Israel, as to be ignorant of my sufferings by the intrusion of John Simpson into my Pulpit, and amongst my people: I doubt not but thou mayest well with many other enquire the reason of my resistance, the which is written in such legible Characters, that just men and zealous Christians cannot but Run and Read them; I have in a small Book, called Right Re-entred, given the world some account, as to my own personal Reasons, wherein had I been silent, can any that know John Simpson, a man subject to such windings and turnings, that he cannot to his own Proselytes appear to be the same this year he was the last: A man under judicial Parliamentary censure for his Errors: a man by the most sage, grave and pious Ministers of this City (the place of his Residence) branded as a Seducer from the truth of Jesus Christ, a man for Sediton (so owned by himself) imprisoned, banished, and afflicted, as an evil doer; a man of such violence, commotion, division, confusion, distraction, disorder: that Bishopgate and Aldgate must needs lament the day of his being in the midst

The Committee for
 Plundered
 Ministers.
 London
 Testimony
 to the truth
 &c.

To the Reader.

midst of them. And yet enquire why should Master Crofton so much withstand John Simpsons preaching; but if he or all his Adherents were (as they never can be) able to acquit him from these Blots that must needs render him unfit for Gospel-work: yet Master Crofton hath too too just cause to withstand his Ministry, not only for his unjust intrusion, and disingenuous silence, under any propounded conveniencie for the people, and malicious exercise of his pretended Ministry, to the meer humoring of an envious, prophane Faction, pursuing nothing but Confusion and Disorder, nor having any assembly of his own to engage him to it. but for these Falshoods, that in the name of the Lord he doth utter to the decrying of Gods holy Ordinances, and danger of mens Salvation; herein he is frequent and of which I should (were it not that my weak people are apt to take boldness to sit under his Ministry from my hearing him) make a full detection: Can any man think Ministerial zeal, can in the least admit a rasons contradiction, of a forenoons Doctrine of Truth. I have before noted to the world, that he no sooner violently entred my Church, and interrupted some of Gods Ordinances but he presently vilifying those he could not hinder, openly averred, that to learn a Catechism was not to worship God; you might as well take your children to the Market or Fair, and buy them baubles, Rattles, and Hobby Horses as Catechisins: I well know that he did with prophane impudence in the Pulpit at Great Al-hallows, and in my own Pulpit make a dreadfull appeal to God, Angels and Men, that he never Preached such Doctrine; but I have offered, and do yet offer, if he will be convicted before any competent Judges, to convince him by some of his late Profelytes,
and

To the Reader.

and many others that heard him speak it, and after most wickedly deny that he spake it; he must not think but we know the Serpentine wisdom of Seducers leads them to deny they spake the doctrine they divulge, if the time and other circumstances will not defend them in it. And yet in the Sermon wherein he would deny this notion, he doth but Familistically Spiritualize, and runs into this assertion, which is yet Tantamount, That it is gross ignorance to say, or think that the teaching of Catechistical heads of Religion is the way to bring any man to the knowledge of Christ. I confess this contempt of catechizing was in my ears, but a præludium to the decrying of Infant-Baptism, which engaged me to attend his Wednesday Lectures for some few dayes, when he was from 1 Pet. 3. 21. Treating of Baptism, wherein I heard many absurdities, false interpretations, and incongruous expressions uttered; but at length found him that pretends he had run over the bogs of Familism, yet not to have been swallowed up in them, to have fallen up to the arm holes, if not over head and ears; for not only did he despise Pædo Baptism by the contemptible terms of Baby-sprinkling, cozening Infants, and the like; but proclaimed Water-Baptism, the very Ordinance it self, to be nothing worth; and the Spirit, inward Grace, the answer of a good conscience, to be all in all, even unto communion with the Church visible; and this he did in a full Discourse, half an hour long, directed to his own Proselytes, with many invectives against such as would not admit Communion with the unbaptized in flesh; these nullifying notions of Gods Ordinance, I could not bear, and resolving they should not corrupt on my stomach, or he have liberty to make a false appeal, to God,

His Book of
Justificati-
on in the
Epist. to
the Reader.

To the Reader.

God, Angels and Men, in the denial of what he had delivered, or to complain, I dealt not fairly by him, publicquely to render him erroneous before I had charged him personally, I did on the day on which he preached it, being the 2. of September, 1657. and as soon as Sermon was ended, repair to my Study, and writ unto him this Letter following.

Mr. Simpson,

I did this day with no little trouble hear your Discourse, and pretermittting your incongruous, impertinent expressions, and misapplication of Scripture, with many Ordinance-degrading, and Church-confounding speeches, you laid down this Inference, That *Baptism is not the ground of communion with the Church, but real grace the answer of a good conscience, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead*: and therefore you did declare, *Though a man were altogether ignorant of the Doctrine of Baptism, and had never passed under that outward Ordinance, you could own him as a Member of the Church, and hold communion with him, and admit him to all the Ordinances of Jesus Christ*: and much to this purpose you delivered.

Sir, When I consider, the answer of a good conscience is onely known to God, I cannot believe God hath made it the ground of communion with men, and outward Baptism to be the first Ordinance of God to the Church, and external Seal of the Covenant, and the very door of admission into the Church erected by Jesus

To the Reader.

Christ, and reckoned by the Apostle among the *ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ ἡ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐκδομένη ἐν ὅλῳ*; and so in all ages of the Church made the foundation of the Church Ordinances *in foro Ecclesie*; I cannot consent to communion with such as are unbaptized, but must fear in this case, God may say to me as to them in *Ezek. 44. 7.* For though outward Baptisme without inward grace can carry no man to Heaven, yet the Church cannot without palpable prophaneness administer other ordinances of Communion to the unbaptized; I pray you tell me whether you do not in vain press me to outward Baptism, when you tell me, *I may live and dye in communion with the body of Christ all my days, and yet never know the Doctrine, nor pass under the Ordinance of water-Baptism?* Is Baptism become an *Adiaphoron*? These things I thus timely signify to you to prevent mistakes (desiring your arguments for your position (for that your Cited Scripture. *Rom. 15. 7.* doth not conclude it but is far wide) to which I promise you a speedy answer, unless they be convincing to

Septemb. 2. 1657.

ZACH. CROFTON.

Though this Letter was by a messenger sent of purpose delivered into his hand, disingenious he never returned answer to it, neither in publique or private, but suffered these contemptible notions to abide on the Spirit of the people, as if they were Gospel truths. Having observed his silence and resolving

To the Reader.

solving to leave him without excuse, I wrote unto him this second Letter.

S I R,

I did this day sevenday signifie my dissatisfaction in your Doctrine, and dislike of that old Familistical notion you published; I demanded your reasons, but have received none. Sir, think you not that it is your duty to convince gainsayers, or can I pass in silence, Baptism-annihilating notions, I cannot, I will not. Sir, I once more demand your Arguments, and that as you are a man of any ingenuity willing to give an account of your Doctrine.

Sept. 9. 1657.

ZACH. CROFTON.

This also he received, but passed it in silence, and never to this day gave any the least answer to defend or retract his error: If therefore I find him obstinate after the first and second admonition, I hope I shall not be blamed for rejecting him as an Heretick, and withstanding him from filling my Peoples Heads with low thoughts of Gods Ordinances, and the high privileges of Grace, whose tongues can already speak too despicably of them: God having in his providence brought me to the section of Baptism in my course of Catechizing, and giving me a little breathing space from the violent persecutions of his Abettors, I thought

To the Reader.

it to be my duty to diffuse to my people, the Dignity of Baptism, and knowing that many heard his Error, who would not bear the correction of it, I have committed it to the Press, and sent it into publique view, submitting it, and my opposition of the Seducer that occasioned it, to thy censure, desiring thou mayst shake off prejudice, and read with seriousness and sobriety, whereby I doubt not but thou mayst find profit, for which he prays, who seeth a Divine Stamp on every outward Gospel-Ordinance.

Zach. Cbroston.

A SHORT
CATECHISM,
BRIEFLY
Propounding, and plainly shewing
THE
V E R T U E and V A L U E
O F
B A P T I S M,
O R,

The following T R E A T I S E fitted
to the weak capacity of such People as desire
to be confirmed in the Nature and Necessity of
B A P T I S M, against the Contempt and Neglect
thereof.

By Zach. Croston, late Minister at Botolph Algate,
London.

London, Printed for Dorman Newman at the
Kings-Arms in the Poultry next to Gro-
cers-Ally.

CATALOGUE

OF THE

MANUSCRIPTS AND LIBRARY

OF THE

BRITISH MUSEUM



The following is a list of the
manuscripts and library
to be deposited in the British Museum
by the Government of India
under the provisions of the
Act of 1857.

The list is divided into two parts,
the first containing the names of the
manuscripts and the second the names of the
books. The list is arranged in alphabetical order
of the names of the authors or subjects.



A SHORT
CATECHISM,

Briefly propounding , and plainly
shewing the Vertue and Value of Baptism.

Quest.



What is your Name ?

Ans. M.

Q. Who gave you this Name ?

A. My Parents the natural Authors of my being , and Instruments of my interest in the Covenant of God.

Q. When did they give you this Name ?

A. At my Baptism, when I was dedicated to God , and by the washing of my body in pure water fitted for approach to him.

Q. What is baptism ?

A. It is a solemn and Religious application of water by the hand of a lawful Minister to fit Subjects to signifie the blood of Christ , and Seal the Covenant of Grace.

Q. What

A short Chatechism.

Q. What is the outward sign in baptism?

A. Water, in opposition to all other elements; and pure water without any mixture or composition; for so Christ did appoint, and his appointment doth stamp dignity on that despicable Element.

Q. What is the inward grace in baptism?

A. The blood of Jesus Christ with its properties and effects, the remission of sin, and regeneration of the soul.

Q. Is baptism only a sign to represent these things to our minds?

A. No, but also a seal to ratifie them to our soul; and therefore a right unto the Promise is the ground of baptism, and baptism a reason of our Faith in the Promise to be pleaded in Prayer for obtainment.

Q. What is the form of baptism?

A. The application of water, by Dipping, or Sprinkling; for the manner is of no moment, so it be done solemnly and religiously, as a sacred Ordinance by divine institution, with prayer to God, and a Dedication of the person baptized, unto the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Q. Who is to administer Baptism?

A. A lawful, and none but a lawful Minister; for Baptism is an act of Office and Argument of Faith; therefore to be applyed by authority; and then the Baptism of women, and private men is void and null.

Q. Who are fit Subjects to be baptized?

A. Such, all such, and onely such as are in Covenant with God; for the qualification that must guide the Church in applying Baptism, must be *Interest in the Covenant*; and these are two sorts. 1. Infidels converted

A short Catechism.

converted to the faith. 2. The Infants of one or both Christian Parents.

Q. By what must Infidels converted to the Faith be judged, within the Covenant, and fit Subjects to be baptized.

A. By making a profession of saving faith, which may be done by men in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity ; not by a saving profession of faith, importing sincerity of grace, nor by a well ordered conversation ; for Gods Ministers must judge by a present visible sign, and they cannot search the heart : And plants are to be set in the Church before we look for fruit ; Baptism is a bond unto amendment of life.

Q. How can it be proved that the infants of Christian Parents are within the Covenant, and to be baptized ?

*A. During the Administration of the Covenant in the times of the Old Testament, the natural issue of Gods people, before they acted their faith, even as soon as they were born, were within the Covenant: The form of the Promise is, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed* : Circumcision the Seal of the righteousness of faith, was set in their flesh at eight days old. God claims the natural issue of his Covenant people as his own, when he calls them out of Egypt, *Exod. 5. 1.* chargeth them with duty, *Dent. 14. 2.* complaineth of Idolatry, *Ephes. 16. 21.* Chastiseth their sin, *Amos 3. 2.* And Christ calls the Jews natural, the *Children of his Kingdom*, and placeth in them the Right to the mercies he brought, whilst the Gentles were *Dogs licking up the crumbs.**

b

Q. But

A Short Catechism

Q. But what is the interest of Infants in the Old Testament to us under the new?

*A. Very much; for whilst we see they have been in Covenant; it will direct us to see a very clear reversal of their right, and plain limitation of the Covenant before we part with such a birth right and privilege; for common Justice will not suffer us without good warrant to change a Fee-farm to our selves and heirs, for a Lease for term of Life; and we need a clear reason to convert the Jews from the old Covenant, whereby they begot an *holy seed* to God, unto a straiter Covenant, that provides for the Parent, but leaves the child prophane, and estranged to God. The Enemies of our Baptism, cry for an expresse command to baptise Infants; but instead of shewing any, we think we have good reason to say, *we as such Infants, have by a long Tenure an interest in the Covenant*; shew us a clear Gospel Writ of Ejection, if you think now to dispossess us.*

Q. But have you any good ground in the New Testament, on which infants, as the natural issue of believing Parents may claim an interest in the Covenant?

*A. Yes, very much, when we consider little sucking Babes brought in arms to be received by the Lord Jesus to be blessed by him, to be declared members of the Kingdom of Heaven, propounded as such who ought to be received in his name, as his Disciples, and not to be offended; all which are the blessings of the Covenant: and that the Apostle affirms of the *Gentiles ingrafted in*, as well as the *Jews cut off*, in *Rom. 9*. That if the first-fruits, then
the*

A short Catechism.

the whole lump is holy ; if the root, then the branches are holy; and the branches do partake of the fatness of the Olive : we must cast away our reasons if we see not Infants interest in the Covenant.

Q. But have you not yet some plainer Scriptures to prove their Title ?

A. Yes, the Apostle doth expressly say the Infants of one Christian Parent is holy, 1 Cor. 7. 14. of real holiness none understand it, and natural holiness, taking away the blot of Bastardy, supposing Faith essential to Marriage, is too ridiculous to be received ; it must needs then mean a federal holiness by the extent of the Covenant, and in the esteem of the Church, in Acts 2. 38. the Apostle saith expressly, The promise is to you, and to your children : This promise cannot be of extraordinary Gifts, because it is extended to all that shall be called, nor is it to children when called, for that were not to them as children : the Holy Ghost doth not use to speak non sense, and expresses personal qualifications by terms of relation, but tels the believer, his children as his children have a priviledge in the Covenant above other mens children ; so that it is plain such Infants are within the Covenant, and according to their capacity to enjoy the Seals and Priviledges thereof.

Q. But they are not capable of being baptized, because they can act nothing in the Ordinance, nor can they make a profession of Faith and Repentance.

A. Nor is such capacity needful ; for profession gives no right to Baptism, but as an evidence of Covenant-Interest : and their right to the Covenant, manifested by their descent from such Parents is as good a reason for their Baptism : and the subjects of the

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A short Catechism

initiating Seal do not act any thing, as if God would thereby dictate, inability to action shall be no bar to Baptism.

Q. But those we read of in Scripture that were baptized were at grown years?

A. So were those who were first circumcised; but that was occasional and circumstantial: The Church is founded in grown Trees, but is to be edified by infant branches.

Q. But their is no institution for Infant Baptism.

A. That Baptism is instituted, cannot be denied: Age or Infancy are onely directions to whom to apply it; and thereof the qualification of Covenant Interest is according to Scripture the clear direction: Moreover Infants may be Disciples, bearing on them the name of Christ, and are Members of Nations, and so the Institution, directing the baptizing of Discipled Nations. is to them extended.

Q. But all you urge for infants baptism, is by way of inference and consequence.

A. Scripture-Inference is Gods Word, binding mans conscience: it was the way of Christ his convincing the Sadduces of the Resurrection; and of Pauls Preaching at Athens; and is your onely way to warrant womens Communion at the Lords Table, and shall it not be of force to Infants Baptism?

Q. What benefit do you receive by your baptism?

A. Much, as I am baptised, and enjoy that Ordinance of God; and much as I was baptized in infancy by the early enjoyment of it.

Q. What is your benefit received by the Ordinance it self?

A short Catechism.

A. A fit qualification to draw nigh to God with confidence.

Q. *What do you mean by drawing nigh to God?*

A. Not onely the possession of heavenly glory when I dye; which I deny not, but such may enjoy whom the providence of God cuts off before they can be baptized: Nor onely the *private and personal acts of the soul*, which may be presented (though not with so much confidence) acceptably to God before a man can be baptized after his conversion; he not living in contempt or wilful neglect of Baptism; but I mean an *approach to God in the assemblies of his people*, to worship before him, as a Member of his Church, and one of his peculiar people, to bear his name in the World, and of his *Royal Priest-hood*, to offer up acceptable Sacrifice, and and enjoy all his Ordinances; all which I do in assurance, having my body washed with pure water.

Q. *Is then Baptism the necessary qualification for approach to God?*

A. Yes, it is so *necessarry* that the unbaptized, may not appear in the Assemblies of his people: The way of Christ his appearance in his Church, as the Messiah, was prepared by Baptism; therefore *John* the promised *Elias*, is called *John the Baptist*. Baptism prepared Christ for his work of Mediatorship; he neither *prayed* (that we read of) nor was *tempted*, nor *preached*, nor *received the Testimony from Heaven* till he was baptized; and if the head were thus sanctified, much more must the members: moreover *Circumcision* did sanctifie such as might come nigh to the Sanctuary; and baptism hath succeeded in the room, signifies and seals the same grace,
and

A short Catechism.

and in all things serve to the same end in the Christian Church, that *Circumcision* did to the Jews.

Q. What is the use of Baptism, that it should so qualifie with confidence in access to God?

A. By baptism I am visibly interested in *Jesus Christ*, *Gal. 3. 27. incorporated into his Church.* *1 Cor. 12. 13. made a member of the household of faith*, and *Common wealth of Israel*, consecrated unto God, *Ephes. 5. 26. having holiness stamped on my flesh*, being *sanctified by the washing of water by the word*; And *in Covenant with God*, having the Seal of the promise, whereby God is become *mine*, and I am dedicated to be *his*, in *faith and obedience to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*: all which are clear grounds of Faith, to be improved unto my encouragement in approach unto God.

Q. Are all that are baptized partakers of these privileges?

A. All that are baptized enjoy these privileges *Visibly and Sacramentally* in the judgement of the Church, by whose just censure they may be deprived of them; but not *Savingly and Sincerely*: for to some the *inward grace* is withheld from Gods *outward Ordinance*, according to Gods holy purpose: And many not *acting faith to claim*, lose the privileges Sealed: *Baptism* is in its nature and efficacy the same to all, but by reason of the incapacity of some it is not always a like *effectual*.

Q. What principles or practices are to be condemned as contrary to this use of baptism?

A. Many, as *1.* Such as *dictate to the unbaptized a liberty of access to God*; teaching that baptism is not
the

A short Catechism.

the ground of Communion with the Church visible, but real grace, the answer of a good conscience, and thereon do tender all the Ordinances to the unbaptized, which is directly opposite to this use of the Ordinance, and inverts the Order of the Gospel, giving God cause to complain, as once in Israel, Ezek. 44. 7. *Ye have defiled my Sanctuary, by admitting into my Sanctuary the unbaptized in flesh and in spirit.*

Q. Who are further to be condemned as contrary to this consecrating nature of Baptism?

A. Such as disown their baptism, in drawing nigh to God; as do some Familists; who deny all outward Ordinances and pretend to serve God altogether in spirit, as if divided man could draw nigh to God, or the Lord would not be adored by the body he hath redeemed; or true grace could admit a contempt of any divine Ordinance: Or the Anabaptists, who are so irrational as to renounce their baptism, because received in Infancy, as if a corruption in circumstance (if this were one) had destroyed the essence of the Ordinance; but indeed they do it out of ignorance, or obstinacy, deeming Gods institution, Superstition, and so run into the sin of Sacrilege.

Q. Is the denial of Infants Baptism Sacrilege?

A. Whilst it robs God of the children to him begotten, the Church of Members to her born, beleiving Parents of a ground of faith, and reason of hope, and the Infants of their undoubted interest in the Covenant, I cannot but judge it sacrilege.

Q. Who else are to be blamed as repugnant to this consecrating nature of Baptism?

A. Such

A short Catechism.

and in all things serve to the same end in the Christian Church, that *Circumcision* did to the Jews.

Q. What is the use of Baptism, that it should so qualifie with confidence in access to God?

A. By baptism I am visibly interested in *Jesus Christ*, *Gal. 3. 27.* incorporated into his Church. *1 Cor. 12. 13.* made a member of the household of faith, and Common wealth of Israel, consecrated unto God, *Ephes. 5. 26.* having holiness stamped on my flesh, being sanctified by the washing of water by the word; And in Covenant with God, having the Seal of the promise, whereby God is become mine, and I am dedicated to be his, in faith and obedience to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: all which are clear grounds of Faith, to be improved unto my encouragement in approach unto God.

Q. Are all that are baptized partakers of these privileges?

A. All that are baptized enjoy these privileges Visibly and Sacramentally in the judgement of the Church, by whose just censure they may be deprived of them; but not *Savingly* and *Sincerely*: for to some the inward grace is withheld from Gods outward Ordinance, according to Gods holy purpose: And many not acting faith to claim; lose the privileges Sealed: Baptism is in its nature and efficacy the same to all, but by reason of the incapacity of some it is not always a like effectual.

Q. What principles or practices are to be condemned as contrary to this use of baptism?

A. Many, as 1. Such as dictate to the unbaptized a liberty of access to God; teaching that baptism is not
the

A short Catechism.

the ground of Communion with the Church visible, but real grace, the answer of a good conscience, and thereon do tender all the Ordinances to the unbaptized, which is directly opposite to this use of the Ordinance, and inverts the Order of the Gospel, giving God cause to complain, as once in Israel, Ezek. 44. 7. *Ye have defiled my Sanctuary, by admitting into my Sanctuary the unbaptized in flesh and in spirit.*

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Q. Who else are to be blamed as repugnant to this consecrating nature of Baptism?

A. Such

A short Chatechism.

A. Such as *disregard baptism in its application to others*; as do *Parents* who pass over their *Childrens* baptism as a *Civil complement*, and *meer Formality* to please *Friends*, but never compose themselves to it as an *act of Religion*, and *Ordinance of God*; pray not for a *blessing on it*, nor praise *God* for the *blessing of it*; nor instruct their baptized children in the *benefit and use of it*: and *people* who attend with some shew of reverence on other ordinances, but rudely rush out of the *Congregation* when baptism is administered, as if it were some idle action; and as if the *sanctifying of a soul to God*, the *sealing of the Covenant*, and *admission of a member into the Church*; were of no use to them, nor worth their attendance.

Q. Who else are to be blamed; as contrary to the nature of baptism?

A. Such as *disesteem their own baptism*, neither improving it against *sin*; nor arguing to themselves the *duty or dignity of their baptism*; so as to make baptism an *engagement* against *sin* to holiness; and *encouragement of their Spirits* in holy duties.

Q. Who else are to be blamed as contrary to the consecrating nature of baptism?

A. Such as *deny the baptized the liberty of access to God in the assemblies of his people*; as do the *Independents*, who gather *Churches* out of *Churches* rightly constituted; and call the baptized in *Church* way, as if they were out of it, and prescribe a *Covenant* of their own, whereby to admit *Church-Members*; and affect to distinguish themselves from *others baptized*, by the term of *Saints, Brethren, Church,*

A short Catechism.

Church, and the like, and deny to communicate with them; as if baptism did not incorporate into Christ his body, and prepare for communion with him in his Ordinances,

Q. To what course of life doth your baptism bind you?

A. To depart from all iniquity; to devote my self, wholly to the Faith and Service of one God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to whom I am dedicated, and all my days to demean my self as a member of Christ his Church, one in Covenant with God, on whom holiness is stamped; and that is sanctified for approach to him.

Q. You speake of some benefit you reaped by your being baptized in infancy; is the early enjoyment of this Ordinance of any advantage?

A. Yes, very much in many things to be preferred before baptism of grown persons, wherein it is more profitable.

Q. What is the first benefit of infant baptism?

A. Infant baptism expresseth clearly the sin of nature; and engageth against it: in that we are washed, it is evident we are unclean; but being so soon baptized, doth witness our very nature is defiled; for infancy did never admit us to be stained with personal guilt as are men at years; and so Infant baptism is an unanswerable argument of our inbred corruption against which we are bound to fight, being baptized before it had spread it self into actual sin.

Q. What is the second benefit of Infant baptism?

A. It

A short Catechism.

A. It explaineth the method, and order of transmitting the covenant, and affecteth us with the benefit of Relation to a believing Parent: That we are baptized speaks us in covenant; but that we are so soon baptized before we have in our selves any qualification for it, shews us as branches, we partake of the fatness of the Olive, and are of the same kind with our Parents: God hath graciously become the God of the believer and his seed, and made grace to run through natures channel, otherwise we had never enjoyed this privilege.

Q. What is a third benefit of Infant baptism?

A. It enlargeth the bounds, and establiseth the being of the Church. Baptism is the band of union, and Ordinance of ingrafting into the Church: but *Infant baptism* doth scatter the holy seed, and send forth sprouting branches, which succeed into the room of old perishing stocks, doth not onely increase the number of the Churches Members, but defend it from the washing annihilating breaches of time.

Q. What is the fourth benefit of baptism?

A. It exciteith Repentance, representing sin in its Root and Original, the pravity of nature; and its gracious object, the God of our Fathers, and the God of our youth, against whom we have offended.

Q. What is the fifth benefit of Infant baptism?

A. It enforceth Faith, not onely in the sealing, but also the extending of the Covenant to the seed of believers, a ground of Parental Prayer for posterity, and an early seizure of our souls, before Satan could possess us, or our own corrupt nature could betray us unto him.

Q. What

A short Catechism.

Q. What is the sixth benefit of Infant baptism?

A. It engageth duty; Parents to Christian education and Instruction of those, who by their Authority are dedicated to the service of the true God; children to the obedience of the God of their Father, and of their youth, who extended to them the Covenant; and so soon set the Seal of it in their flesh.

Q. What is the seventh benefit of Infant baptism?

*A. It encourageth under death, the knowledge of the Covenant extended unto beleivers and their seed, hath prepared young children unto Martyrdom; and interest in the Covenant can be the onely ground of hope to the Parents under the death of their infants, who are born the children of wrath, but by baptism are put into the ark of salvation; such as let go this must cheat themselves by a dream of Childrens immunity from all guilt, and so can not be damned: or a Popish *Limbus Infantum*, or some unusual way of comfort the Scripture doth not warrant.*

Q. May not these benefits redound to such as are baptized in grown years?

A. No, in no wise, for such see not the extent of the Covenant to beleivers and their seed; nor the serviceableness of Relation natural in busineses of salvation; nor do they enjoy the same; and therefore it is our great happiness, that we are not onely baptized, but baptized in Infancy, under all the advantages that either Ordinance or season can afford us.

FINIS.

Q. What is the benefit of infant baptism?
 A. It signifies that we are to Christian education and members of the church, who by their baptism are dedicated to the service of the true God; children to the obedience of the God of their fathers; and of their own, who are called to keep the commandments, and to do the will of their fathers.

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THE
VERTUE and VALUE
OF
BAPTISME,
DELIVERED

In a Summary Sermon at the close of
the Catechetical Considerations of the
Doctrine of Baptism, at Botolphs
Aldgate, LONDON.

TEXT.

Heb. 10. ver. 22. (the last words) — *And our bodies
washed with pure water.*



HE Author of this Epistle, intending a
Confirmation of the Christianized
Jews, in the faith they had received,
and administration of the Gospel, to
which they were subjected; doth assert
Jesus Christ to be the true Messiah; both in respect

of *Person*, as he is *God-man-Mediator*; and his *Offices*, as *Prophet*, *Priest* and *King*, and opposeth him unto all those *Livitical Rites*, whereby he was typified; plainly declaring that the appearance of the *Substance*, put a period to all those *Shadowy Ceremonies* whereby they had worshipped God; and necessitated another manner of administration of *Gods Covenant and Worship*, fit to shew that *the Messiah was come, and no longer to be expected*. Which having by clear *Demonstrations* confirmed in the 19. verse of this Chapter, he enters upon the Application of this *Doctrine*, which he manageth by,

1. Stating the principle proved, as granted and agreed on, *vers. 19, 20, 21. Having therefore brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. By a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh: And having an High Priest over the House of God.*

2. Special Inference of duty, *v. 22. Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

In the Inference we are to note two things,

1. the Duty Inferred, *Let us draw near.*

2. The dictated qualifications of such as must draw near, and they are two, *The heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, the body washed with pure water.*

3. The directed manner of drawing nigh to God, *With a true heart, in the full assurance of faith.*

I intend not a full consideration, and therefore shall not insist on a full Commet upon the whole

whole verse, but confine my self onely to the words propounded; and we see they are the *Dictated quality* of such as are required to draw nigh to God upon the account of the High Priest, and liberty of entrance into the holy place; and therefore is to be Gramatically Read, *Ἐρπαισμένους καὶ λουμένους ὁρμησόμεθα*, *we sprinkled, and washed, let us draw near, &c.* and herein there is among Expositors no difference: but the difficulty is in the Interpretation of the words; many of our modern Expositors differing from the Antients in the same; the last understanding *the Sacrament of Baptism* to be the qualification here spoken of; the former, *External Sanctity*, by way of allusion unto Baptism:

The difference is not much, for if all *External Sanctity* be here intended, then *Baptism*, and if the order of Sanctity be to be observed, *that first*; as it where External Sanctity must begin, yet my judgment leads me to the interpretation of the Antients, and such later Expositors as follow their steps; and so I understand by the body washed with pure water, *the person Baptized* or qualified by due subjection to the Sacrament of Baptism, and hereunto I am guided, *by the opposition of it, to the heart sprinkled*, which intends the real Sanctification of the whole man; and is so interpreted in the 9. Chap. 14. vers. whilst the washing of the body signified External Sanctification, always in use among the Jews, and is soufed by the Apostle, *Eph. 5. 26. sanctified by the washing of water*; as Expositors do agree, the opposition in this Text seems to me, to distinguish the inward grace, and outward sign in dictating the Gospel order of access to God, *to be by Baptism of*

water on the body; and blood, or Grace on the heart: and is the same with that in 1 Pet. 3. 21. Baptism that now is, saves us, not the washing of water, but the answer of a good conscience.

2. *By the occasion of this quality, which seems to me to have been the preventing answer of an objection, that might well be propounded by the Jews thus, You have put a period to all Holy Rites, and laid all the administrations of the Covenant according to Moses in the dust, and tell us positively that they which serve the Tabernacle must not eat at your Altar, (Heb. 13. 10.) nor enjoy with you the Privileges of Grace; we well know God is a Holy God, and will be sanctified in such as approach unto him; and the uncircumcised in heart or in flesh may not come nigh unto him, Ezek. 44. 9. nor enter into his sanctuary; what order or outward ordinance of sanctification is then prescribed in our approaches to God? To which the Apostle answereth instead of Circumcision of heart and flesh under the old, you must according to the direction of the new Covenant and the Gospel-worship, draw near to God with an heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and a body washed with pure water, which will be to you a ground of full assurance, which all the Ceremonies of the Law could not create unto you.*

The words seem not to me to be at all strained into this sense; but of their own selves by a genuine interpretation, thus to speak, that the *outward sign and inward Grace of Baptism* are the onely qualifications of such as will in full assurance of faith draw nigh to God in Gospel-administrations, and the privileges of the New Covenant;

The Vertue and Value of Baptism.

5

In this sense and exposition I stand not alone, for *Aretius* saith expressly, *Corpora Nostra debent esse abluta aqua pura, hoc est, Baptismo Christi debemus esse initiati*: Our bodies washed with pure waters that is, we ought to be initiated by the Baptism of Christs appointment. And *Paræus* saith, *Intelligimus nos intus sanguine & spiritu Christi purgari, foris quod Baptismo ablui corporibus: ad Sacramentum enim Baptismi Apostolus respicere videtur*: Par. in loc. We understand an inward sprinkling of the conscience with the blood and Spirit of Christ, and an outward washing the body by Baptism; for the Apostle looks on Baptism.

The words thus explained, do plainly present to our observation, and consideration, this point of Doctrine.

Doctr. Baptism, or washing of the body with pure water, is a special qualification that fits us for confident approach to God.

In the prosecution of this Doctrine, I shall explain, confirm, and apply it with all convenient brevity.

In the explication we are to enquire what is Baptism?

2. What 'tis to approach to God with confidence?

For the first, I shall not stand upon the acceptations of the word *Baptism*, nor trouble you with the various senses in which 'tis used: but taking it in its vulgar acceptation, as it denominates a Gospel Ordinance and eminent piece of Gods worship, you may receive of it this description.

Baptism

6 *The Vertue and Value of Baptism.*

Baptism is a Solemn and Religious application of water, by a lawful Minister, to a fit subject ; to the signifying of the blood of Christ, and its cleansing property ; and to the Sealing of the Covenant of Grace.

In this description I will not trouble you with a logical distribution of it ; into its parts but propound these conclusions as helpful to your understanding of it.

Conclusion 1. *Water is the outward sign, and matter of Baptism ; water and no other Element ; pure water without popish mixture, or Composition with Oyl, Cream, Spittle, or the like : for this, and this onely Element the Lord appointed ; and his appointment stamps on the use of it, Dignity and Authority ; and justly checks the curiosity of such as are subject to contemn the simplicity of the Element, and advance the dignity of the ordinance by their own dull, but daring inventions: and yet water being an Element, cooling heat, quenching thirst, of common use, and easie purchase, and cleansing all filthiness ; doth fitly represent unto our minds the cooling and refreshing efficacy, the plenty and easie purchase, together with the purifying property of the blood of Christ.*

Conclus. 2. *A solemn and religious application of the water must be the form of Baptism ; That water be applied to the Subject is the essential act of Baptism ; the manner of its application, by dipping or sprinkling, is to be guided by discretion, and convenience ; though we deny not dipping to have been used in the Primitive Churches, in the hot Eastern Countries, where with safety and conveniencie it might be used ; and we grant (all other things concurring)*
dipping

dipping to be a lawful application of the water ; yet it is not *essentially* and *indispensably necessary*, as the Anabaptists do too zealously contend : but it is both lawful and sufficient that the water be *poured or sprinkled* on the Subject ; this hath been the allowed practise of the Church ; and the word *Baptize*, *signifying* any kind of washing, by sprinkling, pouring on, or dipping ; and the measure ; or quantity of water being no more essentiall to Baptism then of Bread and Wine to the Lords Supper, will allow it ; and the Holy Ghost mentioneth the blood of Christ as cleansing, by *sprinkling*, 1 Pet. 1. 2. by way of allusion to this Act in Baptism, as the analogy thereof : and it is more then probable that Baptism in houses, as was that of the Jaylors, *Act*. 16. 33. was administred by sprinkling or pouring on, not by dipping ; and the weakness of children, and coldness of our climate is a just Reason for this manner of Application ; so that either of these may be used without contention

Water what way soever, must be *Solemnly and religiously applied* : in the holy form, and with the holy Rites which God hath appointed ; and with none other, for every common washing or application is not *Baptism* : but *water consecrated* by the word of institution and prayer ; and as an *act of worship to God*, and *argument of faith* applied in the name (that is by the appointment, and to the dedication of the person baptised to faith in, and holy profession) of *Father, Son and Holy Ghost* ; is the Sacrament of Baptism : so that as the Apostle doth well check the horrid prophaneness of such as deemed the common Eating of Bread, and Drinking of Wine to be

be the Lords Supper, by declaring *The Cup of blessing which we blesse* is the Communion of the blood of Christ, and *the Bread which we break* is the Communion of the body of Christ, 1 Cor. 10. 16. thereby pointing unto the solemn and Religious Rites which must distinguish the Lords Supper from common eating and drinking; so the Solemn and Religious Application of water distinguisheth the Sacrament of Baptism from all other common washing.

Conclus. 3. *Baptisme must be administered by a lawfull Minister*; this water may not be applied by every or any private hand; the Lord Jesus hath joyned it in Commission *with teaching and discipling*, so that such only that have the Authority of the one have the Authority of the other; Baptism is on all hands agreed on to be an *act of office* and Authority, and not to be given by men out of office; it is a *Seal* which must be *stamped* (not by a childish impression: but) *with Power and Authority*, to make it valid, a *ground of faith*, pleadable in prayer; so that the Baptism of women and private persons (on what pretended necessity soever it be) is *wicked and prophane*; nay, in my judgement is *void and null*, and not to be salved with a *quod fieri non debuit factum valet*, that *unlawful things are valid when past and done*; though I cannot with the Donatists grant that the *efficacy* of the Ordinance depends on the *dignity* of the Administrator; yet I cannot but believe that the *Authority of the Institutor* is essential to every Gospel-Ordinance to the Church, and must be found in every Administrator thereof; *Ordained Ministers* must give us Sacraments, I and preach
the

the Word too ; if we will not be cheated of Salvation, and content our selves with mock Ordinances ; my muddy brains could never yet conceive the God of Order to make *Office and Authority* essential to political transactions in Kingdoms and Commonwealths ; and yet to leave his Church in such confusion, that the great Affairs of Salvation shall be dispensed by every common hand, as if his care were more for the world then the Church ; which if it be, I will never go to the House of God to behold the beauty of his Holiness, which shines more brightly in the wide Wilderiness.

Conclus. 4. *Baptisme must be administred unto fit subjects* : all Subjects sute not the Ordinance ; Creatures insensible and irrational are incapable of the Grace of God, and these holy Administrations thereof ; the baptizing of Bells, Churches, Fonts, &c. is a piece of Consecration, neither prescribed nor allowed in the New Testament ; but to be damned as prophane and superstitious ; they must be the subjects of Life and Reason that will lie in the least Capacity of Grace and Holiness, and such are the *Sons of men*.

Sons of men are Subjects capable of Grace and Holiness : but the special dispensations thereof in the Covenant of Grace, and its Seals, call for special qualifications ; and therefore Baptism may not be given to *men as men*, and meerly the *sons of Adam*, no, they must first be the *seed of Abraham*, Gen. 17. 13. *for the Covenant of God must be in their flesh*, and by Preaching they must be *discipled* into the Christian Church, and see that the *Promise is to them and to their Children* before they be Baptized,

Act. 2. 38, 39. for Baptism must be the seal of the righteousness of faith, which we have being not yet Baptized, Rom. 4. 11. so that the fit Subjects for Baptism must be not only Men, but Fæderati, such as Covenant with God, to whom the Promise may be judged to belong: they must be made Christians, and lay hold on the Covenant of God, and then be Baptised; I could desire to drive out of your common discourse an ordinary term relating to Baptism (viz. such an one is Christned) if I did not hope you well understand it: Baptism may Christianum dicere, declare and pronounce a man a Christian: but it doth not Christianum facere, make a Christian; if your Children be not made Christians by the extent of the Covenant to believers and their seed, bring them not to me to be Baptized. Most cursedly prophane was the cruelty of the Spanish Papists in America, who with whips and scourges drove the unchristianized, untaught Indians, to the Fonts to be Baptized; for that Baptism belongs to none but Christs Disciples, and Covenant-People.

Baptism belongs to all Christs Disciples, and Gods Covenant-People: so that none of them may without sin, nay sacriledge, be barred from Baptism; and these are resolved into two ranks, and known by two names in the Church (viz.) Infidels converted to the faith, and the Infants of one or both Christian Parents: These two are the orders into which Gods federates have been Ranked, ever since Gods Covenant was established, and his Church was estated, in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their seed:

As to the first of these, they are on all hands consented to, as fit and proper Subjects: only our over-pious age hath started the query, How and when they must be judged converted to the faith? which I must needs resolve to be by a *profession of saving faith*, not the *saving Profession of faith*, and *possession of sincere Grace*; which the Congregating Anabaptists call for: *sincere grace* and *saving Profession* must be the souls care, and ground of joy; but cannot be the sign that shall guide the Church in giving the Sacrament of baptism; *as soon as they professed to believe, Philip Preaching the things of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women*, Act. 8. 12. Philip required no more of the Eunuch in v. 37. And when I hear Peter declared *Simon* the Sorcerer to be after his baptism in the Gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, as v. 23. I perceive they in whose company he was baptized yielded no more; and when I remember *Annanias* and *Saphira*, *Demas*, and other baptized persons proved hypocrites and reprobates; I cannot believe they possessed *sincere Grace*, or made a *saving Profession*; though they professed *saving Faith*: I cannot yet turn *Arminian* and believe true Grace, may be finally and rotally lost; and a man may be a child of God to day, and a child of the Devil to morrow; I have not faith enough to believe that when God made me a *Minister*, he made me a *God*, and endowed me with the power and property of searching the heart: nor have I wit enough to conceive that God making me a Steward of his Mysteries, prescribes to me as my guide the qualification of subjects, which lies be-

yond my knowledge. I believe the grosse enormities of many baptized Saints (as they call themselves) hath convinced them, that true Grace is not within their sight, but they may and have baptized hypocrites : why then do they call for that qualification God hath not directed and they cannot discern ?

God hath made the tongue the trumpet of the heart, and I can better hope men will not play the hypocrite and make that utter an uncertain sound, them I can know the *sincerity* of their Grace.

Though Infidels converted to the Faith be generally resolved within the Covenant, yet since the days of *Balthazar Pacimontanus* (who pretending to have derived his fancy from *Luther*, constrained *Luther* to write against him in the year of our Lord, 1527.) The Right of *Infants* to the Covenant of God, and consequently their capacity for *baptism* hath been called in question ; and of late years hath met with most high and violent (though irrational and unscriptural) opposition : wherein I cannot but admire at the erroneous industry of the *Antipedobaptists*, to curtail Gods Covenant ; cut off their seed from the priviledges of Grace ; and cast away their own reasons, blinding their eyes against plain demonstrations of Scripture, and the Antient enjoyments of the Church, for which we must see better warrant before we strike hands with them, and be of their uncharitable belief ; for if I know any thing of the method of Gods Covenant, or in the least how to Reason from Scriptures, It is as clear as the Sun that *the Infants of believing Parents*, Gods Covenant People, *whilst Infants*, and as their
natural

natural seed are Gods *federates*, and within his Covenant, and so fit Subjects of baptism.

In political and all civil transactions of men, we find all the world over, that Covenants made from, or to parents, do usually include *children* as their *children*, so that by that very *relation*, without any new formal contract, they claim *Priviledges*, and stand bound to *duty*; and when I consider Gods way of dealing in his Church, to be according to mans capacity, and humane method; I have no ground on which to imagine that he hath inverted the order, and cut off Relation in the conveying of the priviledges of Grace, and constituting a peculiar People to himself; for Gods special dispensations do ordinarily run in the same Channel, though not with the same Latitude, that his General Providences do: and then when God after the manner of men assumes to himself a Kingdom, without doubt he confers Honours on, and looks for Loyalty from, his subjects, and their seed or offspring, who as their seed are born heirs of such Honour and Duty.

Further in all the transactions of God with man ever since he had a being; the Covenant of grace hath extended to his *seed*, as *his seed*, without any personal qualification; all that know any thing of Gods dealing with *Adam*, know the Covenant of works was made to him for himself, and his *seed* as they were his *natural seed*; he received priviledges for himself and them, and so he lost them; and by one *mans disobedience we are all made sinners*; if this were Gods method in the Covenant of works, we must have good reasons to make us believe

lieve it is altered in the extent and Administration of the Covenant of Grace : but not to stand on general equity and demonstrations, the Scripture doth by plain and clear instances in both old and new Testament, evidence the *children* of men under the Covenant of grace, to be also in Covenant, as they are their *natural issue*: there is nothing plainer in Scripture then that when the Covenant of Grace was established in *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, it was extended to their natural seed; *their children, as their children* even in *infancy*, and before they attained to any *Personal qualifications* were in Covenant, and the children of God : this is expressed in the very form of the Covenant, *Gen. 17. 7. I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee*: This is evidenced by *Circumcision*, the Seal of the Covenant set in their flesh on this very ground, and that at *eight days old*, whilst *Infants*, unable to any personal acts of *Abrahams* faith.

It must needs be most gross ignorance to say that Circumcision Sealed to the natural issue of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob* the Land of *Canaan* and promise thereof, but not the Covenant of Grace; whilst the matter sealed, and very ground on which every man-child must be Circumcised, is expressly declared to be, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed*; whilst the Holy Ghost tells us Circumcision was the *Seal of the Righteousness of Faith*, which is the Covenant of Grace, *Rom. 4. 11.* and Circumcision was set on the flesh of the *Profelited Gentiles*, who never claimed nor possessed by the vertue thereof, any portion of *Canaan* the land of *Promise*, so that if this were the onely matter Sealed by Circumcision, it did to them

Seal

Seal a blank, and they had by it no benefit ; again, God doth lay an eminent claim to the natural issue of the Jews, in their very apostacies from him, when he calls them out of *Egypt*, he doth it with an especial claim, *let my people go*, *Exod. 5. 1.* when he chargeth them with duty, he enforces it with relation, *ye are the children of the Lord your God*, *Deut. 14. 1.* when he chides their abominable Idolatry, he aggravates it by the sacriledge, owning his own Title, *Thou hast taken thy Sons and thy daughters which thou hast born unto me, and sacrificed*, &c. Thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire, in *Ezek. 16. 20, 21.* When he chastiseth them, he comes to them as a Father, *Ye children of Israel you onely have I known as mine*, therefore I will visit you for your iniquities, *Amos. 3. 1, 2.* and when he comes to deliver them from afflictions, their sins provoke to continue ; the Covenant made with *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, is the onely cogent reason thereunto ; this is pleaded as the prevalent argument and ground of faith in prayer, *Exod. 32. 14. Isa. 64. 9.* And affectionately resented by the Lord, *Levit. 26. 42. Ezek. 16. 59, 60. I might deal with thee as thou hast done when thou didst despise the Oath in breaking the Covenant, nevertheless I will remember my Covenant made with thee in the days of thy youth* ; when I consider this carriage of God toward *Israel*, according to the flesh, I cannot without blasphemy, but think God to be more just then to lay such a special claim under the series of his dispensation towards *Israel*, if by his Covenant with their Fathers he had not a clear and unquestionable Title to the posterity :

It is to me a most senseless and dull evasion, to say that *Israel* were Gods people by right of Creation, as *Wool*, and *Hemp*, and *Flax* are his, whilst he himself tells us, he had *chosent them to be a precious people unto himself, above all people that are upon the earth*, Deut. 14. 2. and *you onely have I known above all the families of the Earth*: Amos 3. 2. Where doth God say of any Nation they are my people, *Israel* excepted; and is not the transmission of the Covenant to the Gentiles, that which makes them who were not a people, to be the people of the living God? and unto this it may further be added that our Saviour in the very rejection of the Jews, when he declares them to be of their *father the Devil*, denieth them not to be the children of *Abraham* (*John* 8.) nay, declareth them to be *children* in the Right to the grace he brought in o the World; in comparison of whom the Gentiles are called *Dogs*, *Mat.* 15. 26. Nay, and owns them as children of the Kingdom of Heaven, *Mat.* 8. 11. And St. *Paul* lamenting the rejection of his Kinsfolk, aggravates their present miserie, by their past mercies, Reckoning up their priviledges *Adoption, Glory, Covenants, Oracles, the giving of the Law, the Service of God, the promises, the fathers, and coming of Christ concerning the flesh*, (but not a word of *Canaan*, the great dreamed of Priviledge in *Anabaptist* view) and determines these belonged not to *Israel* heirs of *Abrahams* faith, but to *Israel* his kinsfolk according to the flesh, even the natural issue of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*.

By all this, and much more that hath been said by others, and might be by me, it is more then manifest, that during the dispensations of the Covenant under

under the Law, and to the Jews the children of Gods Covenant People, even as their children, and without personal acts of faith were in Covenant with God, and subjects capable of the initiating Seal thereof; and methinks under the Gospel if (as undoubtedly it is) the Covenant be substantially the same, though ministerially different: men should have more reason, then to release such a privilege, without a very plain and clear reversal in the New Testament, and limitation of the Covenant to adult and actual believers; which my dimme sight could never see, read, nor dull brain conceive: and more justice to themselves and Posterity, then (if it be at their choice) to change a Fee-farm to themselves and heirs for ever, for a Lease for a term of life, and meer personal title; sure I am, my little honesty would act me with such foolish self love: more regard to the rejected Jew, who are yet the beloved of God according to Election for the Fathers sake, Rom. 11. 28. And in hope to be Re-planted into the Olive from which they were cut off; can we with any confidence court them to a new Covenant with straiter terms? shall we not earnestly emulate and highly provoke them to receive the Gospel, by bidding them to their losse? will not ingenuity engage them thus to retort? *Why do you perswade me to turn Christian? as I am a Jew I beget children to the Lord, and bring forth an Holy seed; the Privileges of the Covenant is entailed on me, and on my Natural issue, and therefore the Covenant of God is set on the flesh of my child as soon as born; whereas if I turn Christian, I bring forth children of wrath, and beget children to the God of the World: I have indeed.*

a Personal right to the Covenant, and am provided for during my own life, but my children are turned into the wide world, to sink or swim, and shift for themselves, without any special Divine Protection; is not a poor pittance with perpetuity better then more large enjoyments with so short a tenure? never tell me of a better Testament on such tickle terms: O the hopes! the hopes of England to convert the late inlet Jews their new inhabitants! by such narrow and Honourable treaty, and tenders of Grace and Salvation.

Me thinks men calling themselves Saints should have more *Religion* then to restrain the Grace God hath extended to themselves and seed; and curtail the Covenant that by the New Testament is conferred on the Believer and his issue natural, even as his child in infancy, and before he acts any Personal faith: when I consider *little infants* sucking the breasts, and brought in armes, not able to go, received by our Lord Jesus Christ by him blessed and pronounced with others of the like kind to be of the Kingdom of Heaven; and propounded not only as examples of meekness and humility, but as objects of charity and observation, not to be offended, but awfully received because Christs name is placed on them, and they are made his disciples, so as that the receiving such a little child must be deemed the receiving of Christ; and the offending one of these little ones, a dolor more dangerous *then a milstone hanged about his neck and being cast into the Sea; Mat. 18. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Mark. 10. 14. Luk. 18. 16.*

And when I consider the Apostles position of that latitude of Sanctity, not only to the Jews the natural

ral branches, but the Christianized Gentiles accidental branches, wilde by nature; but ingrafted in, and partaking of the fatness of the Olive, plainly affirming of both, *if the first fruits were holy, so is the whole lump; if the root be holy, so is the branches,* Rom. 11. 16. Hereby the was observe that from these privileges, the natural branches were, and accidentally may be cut off.

Lastly, When I consider the Apostles clear and serious resolve to the case of conscience propounded by the *Corinthians*, concerning their children born of an Infidel (not adulterous parent) *else were your children unclean, but now are they holy,* 1 Cor. 7. 14. The Anabaptist will not let us understand in this place *Real holiness*, nor do we desire it; and until that they have made it to appear that faith is essential to marriage (which will put marriage in a good tendency to a Sacrament, and please the Church of *Rome*) it is too ridiculous to understand a *natural holiness*, I mean Legitimacy and acquittance from the blot of Bastardy, and then I am constrained to understand a *Fœderal holiness* in the extent of the Covenant and esteem of the Church. These things, I say, consider'd, I must pluck up my reason by the very root if I do not by undeniable consequence constrain my conscience to beleive and preach this point of Doctrine, (viz.) *In New-Testament times, under the Gospel administration of the Covenant of Grace, the natural issue, or infants of beleiving Parents are in Covenant with God, and under the promises of Salvation.* And when I look upon *Peter's* encouragement to the converting Jews to beleive & be baptised, *for the promise is to you and to your children, even to all that are afar*

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off, as many as the Lord our God should call, Act. 2. 38, 39. I must renounce my Grammer and little skill in reading plain English, with the least of understanding, if I do not read, *Believing Jews and their children, and also beleving Gentiles and their children, have that interest in the promise that may be to them a ground of faith, and confer on them a Right to Baptism.* And the Anabaptist gloſs that the promise was of extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost (for these are not extended to all that are afar off when God doth call them, nor created they any right to Baptism, for many time they followed this Sacrament) or that children, when called to the faith of the Parent, should have the right to the promise (for that is to them as called, nor as children. And my miad is very foggy, I am much out, if this term of Relation do not dictate a priviledge and Propriety by vertue of relation which children of such parents as children should enjoy, above what children of other parents did or could enjoy) is too short a Fescue to make me read otherwise.

Thus then it doth fully and plainly appear, that under Old and New Testament administrations of the Covenant of Grace, the infants of believing parents are *Fæderati* within the Covenant, and so fit and proper subjects of Baptism to be Baptized. Nor is their incapacity of making a vocal profession of faith any bar to their Baptism, for profession simply creates no rite to Baptism, I never read the Devil was Baptized; and I beleive the Dipping Saints will not now baptize him; yet he really believed, and more then once professed, That Jesus Christ was the Son of God. Profession as an evidence of Covenant-interest,

interest, was the Churches guide to Baptism : and the Scripture giving another demonstration of *Covenant-interest*, viz. *Decent from believing Parents* ; that is also to be regarded, and the one to be no bar to the other , but both in their place gives due direction, who are foederates, and to be Baptized.

Nor is the Argument of any more force because the Scripture mentioneth *vocal profession*, and Baptisme upon it, but passeth the other in silence ; for *occasional and circumstantial actions* are no binding precedents, or universal direction to the Church of God : the Church is founded in *grown persons*, whose *Covenant-interest* can be known no otherwise but by vocal profession ; but it may be edified by *infant-Branches*, who by a course of nature partake of the fatness of the Olive, having the birth-right of the Covenant : thus it was with *Abraham* and his issue, and so with us. 2. Where the *general nature of the Covenant*, with a long and particular exercise thereof doth dictate, there needs no particular *explicite directions* : God in his wisdom designing our right understanding and rational improvement of the Covenant, and our reverend esteem of the old Testament, in its use and necessity to the Christian Church, representing unto us the order of the administration of the Covenant and circumcision, refers us thither for direction concerning Baptism ; and we must needs in reason see that the change of a meer Rite or Ceremony under the continuation of the substance, and same Covenant ; will never admit a change of the subjects to be sealed.

Last of all, *Infants inability to action* is no bar to their baptism; because it voids not their interest in the Covenant: and the Sacrament is such wherein they are to be meerly passive. When I observe God to have appointed the Initiating Seal of Initiating grace, to be such where men of the greatest activity are altogether Passive; he seems to me to suggest these shall not act in their admission into the Church, and receiving of my covenant; that inability to action may be no bar or hindrance to such as have no less interest in the covenant; and onely *Covenant-interest* shall make capable of the Seal.

Let not any Antipædobaptist think to amaze us by crying, Why, Sir, on this ground infants may have a right to the Lords Supper, for we say so too; they have *jus ad rem*, though not *jus in re*, their right is not denied, though present incapacity hinders their enjoyment.

These things considered, we must tell the Anabaptist, That infants right to the covenant, and enjoyment of the initiating Seal, having been continued throughout the old World under the Law without the least controul, and also under the Gospel for more then 1600. years; without any General interruption or the least disturbance, until within this 200. years, we must find better warrant to divest us of it, before we part with it; and our antiquity (on so clear a Title) in the enjoyment, methinks should be no mean argument to ingenuity; for we say in this case as *Jephthah* to the King of *Ammon*, Judges II. 26. *When Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns, in Aroer and her towns, and in all the Cities of Arnon three hundred years, why did ye not then recover*

cover them in that space & so whilst infant right to the Covenant, and initiating Seal dwelt in Judea, and her towns, in Asia and her towns, and in all the cities of the Church of God, and the borders thereof 2000 years, why did you not recover them in that space? surely now you may despair of ever doing it; how much soever you disturbe our peace, we will never part with this priviledge.

Conclus. 5. *The signifying of the blood of Christ with its effects, and the sealing of the Covenant of Grace is the end of Baptism; Baptism is both a sign and Seal to excite our thoughts, and affect our mind with the blood of Jesus, and assure our hearts of a right unto the Priviledges of the Covenant, so as to argue them to our soul as grounds of faith on which we are to urge God in prayer: herein it agreeth with other Sacraments, and in special circumcision, into whose place and end it hath succeeded; in that it is a sign and Seal of the righteousness of faith, Rom. 4. 11. And so the analogy between water in all its properties, and the blood of Christ doth clearly hold, and the Scripture doth plainly attribute Remission, Sanctification, Regeneration, and Salvation to the outward sign or act of baptism, as the graces to be brought to our minds, and made sure to our souls thereby; Mark 16. 16. Acts 2. 38. Ephes. 5. 26. Titus 3. 3. I Pet. 3. 21.*

Baptism is not onely a Seal from God to us as a ground of faith: but also from us to God as a reason of duty: our subjection to it is an actual confederation with God, *that we will be called by his Name, live as his servants in all obedience to his will; so that hereby we are bound to beleive in Christ, and forsake,*

forſake, nay fight againſt ſin: this the Apoſtle dictates when he demands of the *Corinthians*, directing them to joynt advancement of Chriſt, *into whoſe name were ye baptized?* 1 Cor. 1. 13. And Peter aggravates the Apoſtaſie of Chriſtians, nay non-proſiciency in Grace with this, *They have forgot they were waſhed from their old ſins*, 2 Pet. 1. 9. Baptiſm will be a monument of perfidy againſt profane Chriſtians to all Eternity, and aggravate their miſery: ſo that although baptiſm do not convey Grace *opere operato*, by the meer work, or by any Phyſical natural power that is in it ſelf, yet it is a moral inſtrument, by contemplation to be rationally improved to the affecting of our hearts with our own uncleanness, and the blood of Chriſt; Gods mercy to us, and our duty to him: nor is it *nudum ſignum* a meer ſign to excite our thoughts, but alſo a *real Seal*, Gods holy Ordinance, Creating to all baptized, a Right to the Covenant, by rational acts of faith to be argued, to their own joy and duty, and pleaded to God in Prayer; ſo that theſe priviledges being not poſſeſſed by all baptized, ſprings not from any defects in the Ordinance, but neglect in the ſubjects: if men will not claim by a conferred title and viſible Seal, they deſervedly loſe their intereſt.

Here note that I have not wit enough to conceive that the *end of the Sacrament makes againſt Infant-baptiſm*; for Infants are capable of Right though not of claime and poſſeſſion, and baptiſm is given as a *ground*, not *effect* of Chriſtian claim; I ſee no reaſon why Infants may not be *sealed* in the cradle, as well as *Crowned* in the mothers belly; nor is there any force in the confederation of the baptized, un-
leſs

less it must needs be actively and cannot be passively done ; I conceive *parental power* in dedication to God ; and the *sovereign nature of the Covenant* imposing on the party Sealed, the condition to be by him performed, at well as sealing the comforts to be enjoyed, doth fully enforce the confederation of such as are at present non-agents : It will be a hard matter to make me believe that Gods condescension, hath lost his authority any more in the Covenant of Grace, then in the Covenant of Works ; or that Infants are not as capable of confederation by baptism, as they were by circumcision.

I have done with the first thing, to shew you what baptism is, and now come to the second, to shew what is here meant by *confident approach* :

Approach to God is the act of a baptized soul, and it is done either by *the preception of faith*, which is the evidence of things not seen, and substance of things hoped for, *Heb. 11. 1.* This is that personal and private act of the soul whereby it seeth and saluteth God at a distance, with sighs and groans which cannot be uttered, and giveth an assent unto truth apprehended, which is or cannot be expressed ; and hereby we deny not the *unbaptized*, in extraordinary causes, where the body cannot be washed by pure water ; as in an *Indian Country* remote from the Church, or in the Church, under a limited order and season of baptising, as it was in some Churches in primitive times, when they baptized but twice in a year, may draw nigh to God ; no doubt but the *Catechumeni*, such as learned their Catechism in order unto baptism, had sweet communion with God alone ; whilst they wanted Com-

munion with the Church ; otherwise they had never been able to endure Martyrdom.

2. Or *by possession of glory*, when the Soul departing out of the body returns to God who gave it, and is received into *Abraham's bosom*, or eternal blisse in the presence of God for ever ; and this I deny not may be, and doubt not is enjoyed by many *unbaptized* ; I can neither with some *Anabaptists* grant that *all that dye in infancy*, and before stained with actual guilt are *certainly saved* ; I see no warrant for it, nor yet with the Papists do I think all that die *unbaptized* are damned : I believe baptism is necessary by reason of Gods command, and as the ordinary Ark or means of salvation ; and so the sinful contempt or neglect of it to be damnable (though I will not determine God will charge it on the the helpless infant) yet I see not its necessity to be so absolute, that providence superseding the Ordinance by unseasonable death, sets the soul under inevitable condemnation ; I have confidence to meet many an uncircumcised *Israelite* in Heaven, who died before the eighth day of his age ; and if in any, in this case God will have *mercy and not Sacrifice*.

3: Or *by the presentation of duty* ; and performance of publick devoire in the Tabernacle of the Lord, going up with his Saints, worshiping in his Sanctuary, and in the Assemblies of his People in all the parts of Gods Worship ; this is an *appearing before God in Sion* : and a *drawing nigh unto him in his holy place*, not to be admitted to the *uncircumcised* among the Jews ; nor *unbaptized* among Christians : this unto me seems to be the drawing nigh intended in the Text, and is that I intend in the Doctrine
(viz.)

(viz.) That the Levitical Rites being abolished, and the way of access to God is now by Gospel Ordinances; they that will use them, must begin at baptism, and first have *their bodies washed with pure Water*, and be thereby made members of the body or Church of Christ; and be consecrated unto God; without which such as have the charge of Gods Holy things, must keep them from intermeddling with them.

Confidence is the adjunct quality of this act of approach to God, and stands opposite unto the *tremblings, and despondency of the uncircumcised Gentiles*, who could expect no other but rejection and displeasure in their approach to God; for that they were *aliens and strangers to the Commonwealth of Israel, without God, and without hope in the World*, Eph. 2. 11, 12. Positively forbidden approach to God and the use of his Holy things? Ezek. 44. 9. *And to the terrors of the circumcised Jews*, who though admitted into Gods presence, were yet kept at a distance, and might not enter the *Holy of Holies* in their own persons, but by their High Priest; but now such was the privileges of *Believers*, and the advantage of baptism, that the baptized might not only enter the sanctuary, whence the *uncircumcised* were excluded, but also the *Holy of Holies*, not made with hands, but eternal in the Heavens: so that they who by baptism have *their body washed* in the outward sign, and *their hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience*, the inward Grace of this ordinance, are required to shake off all *fears and doubts*, and to encourage themselves to the enjoyment of all Ordinances, and discharges of all duties whereby they may walk with God,

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and hold communion with him; for that they are the persons so qualified as that the Church must not only admit them to outward acts of worship, but also a liberty of inward adoration (by the nearest approach they can possibly make to God) is their privilege: to them is given full assurance of ready acceptance; for the way is open to the *holiest*, the *Vale* is rent, the *High-Priest* gone before, and the liberty left common to all such (though none but such) as having their *hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*, and their *bodies washed with pure water* do draw nigh to the same: both these are necessary qualifications: for, an approach to God without an heart *sprinkled*, must needs be diffident, and full of doubts; and without a body *washed*, dreadful and full of horror.

The Text and Doctrine you have had explained, and you see the point of Doctrine plainly asserting, *That Baptism or the body washed with pure water, is the especial qualification that must fit us for an approach to God.*

The next thing to be done is to prove the Doctrine, and it is in it self a truth so plain, that none that understand any thing of the method of Gospel-worship, and the necessity of outward acts, and body-qualifications in approaches to an holy God, but do subscribe unto the truth of it. Indeed the late spiritual Chymists, who have by our late overlarge liberty of conscience, (I mean sinful toleration,) had the boldness to blaspheme all Gods holy ordinances, and under a pretence of spirituality, to nullifie all outward acts of worship and qualifications to duty, have denied it: and the late intruder into this place, hath openly decried the necessity of this
qualifi-

qualification in access to God, offering the liberty of Church Communion, and the priviledges of the Covenant to such as never passed under *water Baptism*, as if the order of the Gospel were now inverted, and Gods Ordinances not capable of profanation; or the *answer of a good conscience, real grace*, were obvious to every eye that hath the charge of holy things, and is a Steward of the Misteries of Salvation; I shall therefore briefly enforce this plain, and generally acknowledged truth with these commonly known observations; as the reasons thereof.

Reas. 1. *Baptism prepared the way of the Messiah, or Christ his appearance in, and approach to the Church*: the qualification that fits the Church for Christ his approach to her, fits the Church for approach to Christ or God; for these are reciprocal, the one goes not without a return of the other, and the same qualification must be in both; for that holy Majesty is present, *Holiness is in the Assembly of the Saints*, when God comes to his people, as well as in Heaven when his people come to him: and all that will walk in this consuming fire and meet this Messiah, and be made fit to enjoy him, must not onely have the *heart sprinkled*, but also the *body washed with pure water*; *Baptism* is the sanctification of the People, directed to prepare them for Gods appearance in Mount Sion: the voice of the grand Herald crying in the wilderness, *prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths strait*, Mat. 3. *Repent and be Baptised*: The Mace of Majesty born by the Messenger of the Messiah to strike aw in, and require subjection from the expectants of his coming, was the *Baptism of amendment*

ment of life : The levelling Engine that pulled down and made plain all mountainy and proud hearts that withstood the coming of Christ in his first appearance was Baptism : insomuch that the Scribes and Pharisees who rejected the counsel of God against themselves not being Baptized, are all along branded as Enemies, who would not have Christ reign over them : in a word, the promised and prophesied *Elias*, who was to come before the Lord to prepare his way ; is from his preparative work (which is plainly declared to have been Preaching and Baptizing) denominated *John the Baptist* : and the way of the Lord thus prepared is proclaimed as a ground of confidence to the Church, *Isa.* 40. 3, 9, 11. So that if the way of the Messiah his appearance must be the way of the Churches approach to him : as it is evident it must, in that baptism did not onely precede, but also follows his appearance, for *John the Baptist* did not onely prepare for his coming, but ever since his assension his Ministers do go *teach and Baptize* into the Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; Baptism hath ever been the *Discipling form*, method of matriculation in his School ; and incorporation into his body ; and solemn consecration unto communion with him of all such as were *afar off*, but are now *made nigh*, even the people of the living God ; their *Baptism* is the qualification that fits for a confident approach to God, without which we cannot be assured of acceptance.

Reas. 2. *Baptism prepared Jesus Christ unto the work of Mediatorship* : The way of access to God is the same for the people as priest ; for the Head as
Mem-

Members; for the Church as for Christ : the Mediatour as Man must manifest himself holy in all things ; not onely in an immunity from all possitive acts of sin, but also a positive performance of all duty ; he becomes in all things obedient unto the Father ; lives in Communion with the Church, and is conform to all holy Ordinances ; proclaiming himself a member of the Church, before he propose himself a mediator for, or to the Church ; *he is Baptized* because it thus became him to *fulfil all righteousness*, by his subjection to Ordinances, and thereby suiting himself for his work : he doth not onely shew but sanctifie them to be the way of access to the Father ; for he as our High-priest hath left open the same way of proach ; and as the Captain hath marched in the same steps of Salvation in which we are to follow him ; and we shall find him *Baptized*, and so immediately entring on the exercise of his Mediatorship : when (and not till then) he was Baptized, he is *solemnly inaugurated into his office*, coming out of the water, the Spirit came visibly on him, and the voice was heard, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear him.* We never read of his praying, preaching, and combat with the Devil till he was Baptized, and no sooner was he *Baptized*, but as consecrated to God, he *Prayed*, Luk. 3. 21. as confirmed to the Combat, he was *led immediately into the Wilderuess to be tempted.* Mark 1. 12. And as one now compleatly fitted to transact the business of mans salvation, he *Preached the Kingdom of God*, Mat. 4. By all which the mediator doth plainly dictate, that Acts of holiness must move in order, beginning at Baptism : and that

Baptism

Baptism doth fit men to prayer, for *temptation*, and all publique acts of Religion; and if any will in confidence of acceptance follow the mediator, they must have their *body* first *washed with pure water*, and be by Baptism thereunto prepared.

Real. 3. *Circumcision was the qualification of confident approach to God under the old Covenant*: And therefore Baptism having succeeded into the place, standing in the stead, and serving to the end for which Circumcision served, must be so under the new Covenant. The administration of the Covenant may be altered, but the Covenant it self abides substantially, the same to the Church of God both in the Old and New Testament. Sacraments are permanent and inseparable adjuncts to the Covenant as grounds of Faith: and however the different administration may cause a change in the Rite and outward Ceremony, in the matter applyed, or form of application, yet is there no change in their use and signification: but what was of old signified by the Seals of the Covenant, the same is now signified by such as have succeeded into their place; thus the *Lords Supper* supplyeth the room of the *Passover*; and *Baptism* the room of *Circumcision*; so that whatever *Circumcision* did confer on its Subjects, the same priviledges are by *Baptism* conferred on its subjects. And *Circumcision* was to the Jews the *Door of admission* into the Church, the *Ceremony of Consecration* to such as approach to the Lord; and the *Character of distinction* on the people of the living God; and so the qualification that was unto them the ground of confidence in approach to God; hence

Circumci-

Circumcision and uncircumcision are the distinguishing terms between the Jews (the onely people related unto God) and the Gentiles (that were afar off, without God, and without hope in the world, *Rom.* 2. 26. *Ephes.* 2. 11, 12.) and the approach of the *uncircumcised* unto the Sanctuary of God, is declared to be a polluting, and prophaning of Gods Sanctuary, *Ezek.* 44. 7, 9. therefore such are forbidden the least approach to God; they may not enter the Sanctuary nor observe the Lords Passeeover, *Exod.* 12. 48. Nay, the *uncircumcised* must be cut off from the Lords people, *Gen.* 17. 14. And if a stranger will come nigh to God and have a place in his Sanctuary, he must first lay hold on the Covenant of God and be *Circumcised*; so that by *Circumcision* Jews were acknowledged, and Gentiles profelyted members of the Church, entituled to the Covenant, and entrusted with the liberty of access to God in his Sanctuary.

That *Baptism* is the Ordinance under the new Testament answering unto *Circumcision* in the Old, can any that observe the order of the Gospel, the cessation of *Circumcision*, the regular succession of *Baptism* into its place, beleiving some initiating Seal essential to Gospel administration; and see none established if *Baptism* be excluded; and find *Baptism* in all things fully significant of what was signified by *Circumcision*, deny that baptism is succeeded into the room, serves to the end that *Circumcision* did; and so confers the same privileged of confidence; and is Essentially necessary to such as approach to God in acts of worship? Unto such I would in short say, Did *Circumcision* incorporate into the Church, are we not all

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Baptized into one Body ? 1 Cor. 12, 13. did *Circumcision* put the name of God on any ? do not as many as are *Baptised* put on Jesus Christ ? Gal. 3. 27. Was *Circumcision* a sign of Regeneration, called the *Circumcision of the heart* ? Are not the *Baptized buried with Christ in Baptism* ? Doth not the Apostle in this very respect note the agreement of these two distinct, but not different Seals ? Col. 2. 11, 12. Did not *Circumcision* Seal the Covenant of Grace, *I will be your God* ? is it not therefore called the Seal of the righteousness by Faith ? Rom. 4. 11. Is not the propriety to the promise of Grace, Remission and Salvation the very ground entitling and encouraging to *Baptism* as the Seal thereof ? Act. 2. 38, 39. And is not this agreement sufficient to demonstrate, that *Baptism* is now what *Circumcision* was of old to the Church ? What if in some things these two Seals do differ, is the difference so essential as to deny the succession of the one to the other ? It is true, the one was by *blood*, the other by *water* ; the one is to *male* and *femal*, both sexes, the other to *males* onely ; the one limited to the *eighth day*, the other left at liberty : but do these or the like hinder either the one or other from being Ordinances of *Incorporation* to the Church, *Consecration* to God, or *Confirmation* to our confidence in drawing nigh to God ? Will not the differences be found as many and great between the *Passover*, and the *Lords Supper*, yet the succession of the one to the other will not be denied ? *Circumstantial* differences do shew they are not the same in *substance*, and *matter*, but they must be essential disagreements that shall deny a succession unto the same use and end. And if *Baptism* be

not

not the ordinance that supplyeth the room of *Circumcision*, what doth? How is it called? when and where was it instituted? and who were ever consecrated by it, so as to have the boldness of access to God? Or is the Church defective under the New Testament as to an initiating Seal? so that the holy things of God lye common, no visible badge of holiness is now to describe them that may with freedom use them.

Most rude and ridiculous is that objected bar to this succession that some Antipedobaptists have urged and talked of among you, viz. *Circumcision was a National privilege, and onely sealed the promise of Canaan to the children of Israel.* If so, how then came it to be used before *Israel* was a Nation? and how came it to be used after the land was possessed and the promise accomplished? Why doth *Moses* mention the Covenant of grace, *I will be your God*, as the ground and reason of Circumcision? To what doth the Circumcision of heart so frequently mentioned in Scripture allude? it is often joyned with the Circumcision of flesh: What was the benefit of Circumcision to the profelited Gentiles? We never read that by the vertue of it they demanded, or the Jews divided to them any portion of the Land of *Canaan*: And it will be an hard matter to make me beleve it did to them Seal a Blank, for that I find it in Scripturre called, *A layinghold on the Covenant of God*; and the *Uncircumcision* are declared strangers to the covenant, and without God, and without hope in the world. Why doth the Apostle define *Circumcision* to the Seal of the righteousness of Faith? I find this phrase to denominate the Covenant of Grace and

its Spiritual priviledges ; but that it ever denominated *Canaan* , or any National priviledges , I am yet to be informed : And the limitation of it unto the personal faith of *Abraham* is so inconsistent to the scope of the Text , absurd in it self ; and smells so much of Popish *Ballarmine* , that I cannot but avoid (I had almost said abhor) it : But lastly , I would Query whether the adversaries of *Circumcision* sealing the Covenant of Grace , did ever yet observe *adjuncts* separable from a Covenant to bear the name of a Covenant ? or did ever yet discern that the Land of *Canaan* was an appendant on the Covenant , but not of the *essence* of the Covenant , which if they well study , I doubt not but they will correct their ignorance , and the errors thence arising ; and so with us conclude , That *Circumcision* sealed Spiritual priviledges to the Jews , as *Baptism* doth to Christians ; and *Baptism* succeeding to its use and ends , must have the same subjects , and is now the special ground of confident approach to God.

Real. 4. *The nature and order of Baptism doth dispose unto a confident approach to God :* Baptism is a Seal and the first Seal to the Covenant of Grace and Salvation , and so is a ground of Faith , and an encouragement in access to God : But in the nature of *Baptism* three things do dispose unto confidence in approach to the Lord :

It is an Ordinance,

1. *Of Conjunction to the Church.*

2. *Consecration to God.*

3. *Confederation with God.*

And every one of these are Reasons of boldness in access and assurance of acceptance.

1. Bap-

1. Baptism is an Ordinance of *conjunction to the Church*. The Church is Christs body, and every individual Christian is a member thereof, united by *Baptism* as by Nerves and Sinews: none but the Church may come nigh unto God, in *Zion* every one must appear before God: Christ is onely conversant with his Spouse; if the Gentiles will draw nigh to the God of *Jacob*, they must joyn themselves to *Israel* the people of the Lord; and all beleivers that will come nigh to God, must be added to the Church; all the promises of God are made to the Church; and all the administrations of the Covenant are in and to the Church; *Ex Ecclesia nulla Salus, out of the Church no Salvation*. They that will come nigh to God as his Children, must be the Daughters of *Sion*; of the household of Faith; and Common-wealth of *Israel*. To be cast out of the Church, is to be debarred of all Priviledges of grace, and delivered over to Satan; for that relation to the Church is the onely reason of every individual believers claim of promises and priviledges, and ground of confidence in all worship unto God; and this relation is conferred by Baptism, *1 Cor. 12, 13 We are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, bond or free. Baptism is the onely badge of distinction to the Lords people: the very door of admission into the household of Faith; the very method of matriculation to Christ, his Disciples; and manner of adding to the Church such as shall be saved, AÆ. 2. 41.* In a word, *baptism is the band of union to all Gods servants*, binding them to a constant adherence to his Name, and joynt attendance on his
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Worship; and is the *bar of division* from all others that are yet strangers to the Covenant; so as that until baptised they may not communicate of the holy things of God with the Church, nor come nigh with them to the Lord. In the primitive times of the Church the *Catechumenists*, who were preparing for *Baptism*, not having been yet Baptized, were sent from Church Communion and holy priviledges with the profane and penitentiaries by the cry of *Sacra Sacris*, *holy things for holy men*: but when by Baptism they were incorporated into the Church then they continued in *prayer, breaking of bread, and every act of Worship to God with confidence*: so that till the Church appear our *Mother* we see no warrant to call *God Father*; his Children are no Vagrants in the high way and hedges, and when begotten by uncorruptible seed of the word, we were by Baptism placed in the lap, and laid to the breasts of the Church, then as her children we claim all the priviledges of the Covenant and come to the Throne of Grace with confidence; nor may any without a forfeiture of *Baptisme* be judicially exacted by the Church, deny our relation and liberty of access to God; I never yet could conceive any warrantable reason, to deny the liberty of access to the Lords Table, to such baptised souls, whose horrid prophaneness, and obstinate spirits did not make them obnoxious to the censures of the Church, in order to their excommunications and dismembring from the body; and certainly *Circumcision* did not more firmly incorporate unto the Church under the Law, and confer a liberty of approach unto the Sanctuary, then *Baptism* doth under the Gospel.

2. Baptism is an Ordinance of Consecration unto God, God is a God of Holiness and will be sanctified in such as come unto him ; none may appear before him in their prophaneness ; the Mass of Mankind is so prophaned with sin that men in common may not appear before God ; such as shall adore him must be adorned for him ; and if they will hold communion with him, they must be consecrated to him ; God never comes nigh to *Israel*, but he first calls to have the people *sanctified* ; nor comes the *Messiah* before his Messenger had *prepared his way* ; *Israel* the onely Nation that holds communion with, and comes to God are called an *holy Nation* ; because consecrated by Circumcision ; hence Circumcision is the term and title of a *sanctified people* ; but uncircumcision the Title and term that denominates the *prophanations* ; that might not come nigh to God : It is Gods command that such as were not first sanctified by *Circumcision* must not touch the Passeeover, and it is given in charge to the keepers of the Sanctuary that the *uncircumcised* enter not into it to pollute it ; unhallowed things much less unhallowed persons, might not come nigh to God under the Law : the holiness of God is the same under the Gospel, and therefore such as will come nigh unto him must be consecrated, for he will have acceptable Sacrifice to be offered by a *chosen Generation*, a *Royal Priesthood*, an *holy Nation* ; 1 Pet. 2. 5, 9. Men must be brought out of the high-ways and hedges, and in his house be cloathed with a Wedding garment, that with any confidence will expect a welcom to his Wedding Supper, Mat. 22. And the onely Ordinance of Con-
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secration to God is Baptism: This is the badge of distinction and bar of division between the holy and prophane; if the Lord Jesus will present his Church to God, he *sanctifieth it by the washing of Water through the Word.* Ephes. 5. 26. And if ever we will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, we must be born *of the water and spirit*: by baptism we are *purified from the Corruptions that are in the world through lust*, and solemnly dedicated unto the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost; hereby we are separated from the World, and added to the Church; and the *baptised* continue together in the Apostles Doctrine *in prayer, and breaking of bread, and all acts of worship*; so that being thus consecrated, called out of the mass of mankind, and constituted a peculiar and holy people to the Lord, *Let us draw nigh in full assurance, having our bodies washed with pure water.*

3. Baptism is an Ordinance of Confederation with God; two cannot walk together except they be agreed; God is a consuming fire to man if he condescend not to a Covenant, as a skreen to prevent its scorching heat; *I will be your God and ye shall be my people*, is the onely argument of encouragement to Abraham to walk with God, and assurance of Believers acceptance with God; guilty man cannot come nigh offended God without some assurance that wrath is appeased and God reconciled; none since Adams fall can come nigh to God as a Creator; and Redemption must be transmitted by a Covenant; and the Administrations of the Covenant must be the onely pledge of assurance, and encouragement

ment unto access to God ; the Covenant of God with *Levi* is the onely liberty of the Priests entrance in the *Sanctum Sanctorum* ; the Covenant of *Mediatorship* is the confidence of Jesus Christ, his intercession, and the Covenant of *Circumcision* the *Israelites* title to the Pascheover and freedom of the Sanctuary ; and the Covenant of *Baptism* Christians right to the Lords Table, and freedom of drawing nigh to God.

The *Baptized* do confederate with God, you have heard before that they must be *federati*, in Covenant, that are subjects of Baptism, *the promise is to you*, is the ground and reason why any is baptized. Baptism is the mutual act of sealing the Covenant between God and the soul ; by this outward sign and pledge God assureth us *he will be our God*, pardon our sin, subdue our corruptions by the blood of Christ ; and we answerable stipulate with God, that *we will accept him to be our God in Christ* ; we will be called by his name, and become his servants, so that Baptism is an argument pleadable in prayer for the remission of sin, and sanctification ; and an engagement unto duty, against all impiety to be urged under all temptation ; as it is a Sacrament it is a reciprocal bond between God and the soul : when *Paul* would check the *Corinthians* Schism, he doth it by this query, *were ye Baptised into the name of Paul* ? importing you are to call your selves by his name with whom you confederated in Baptism, so that the *Baptised* being *Gods federates* ; the Covenant being in their flesh, they must needs be qualified with confidence to come nigh to God, having such a ground of faith whereupon to claim the

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promises as is the Seals of the Covenant ; the most encouraging argument that ever Gods people urged in access to God is, *Lord remember thy Covenant ; we are thy people.*

We see then, that if we will be guided in our drawing nigh to God , by the way of Christ , his *appearance to his Church* , or approach to his Father as a Mediator, or if we observe the *succession of Baptism to Circumcision* ; or the nature of Baptism as an Ordinance of *confederation with God ; consecration to God ; conjunction to the Church of God* ; we must needs be convinced that Baptism or the body washed with pure water is an especial qualification that fits us for access to God. And now we proceed to the Application of the Doctrine.

The first use then that we should make of this point is of *Information* , and that teacheth us this Lesson, *Baptism is an Ordinance of exceeding dignity and absolute necessity* to be pursued, and highly prized by the people of God that will draw nigh unto him : for it is the especial qualification that fits us with confidence to draw nigh unto him ; as it is an Ordinance of God , it is the Object of reverence, and esteem , and indispensably necessary by reason of *Divine command* ; not to be slighted by such as profess subjection to him : but of much more value when considered as the Ordinance of *incorporation into Christs body* , martrication into the Household of faith , and consecration unto an holy God , and so it doth not onely call for affection , esteem , honour and reverence ; but also it presents it self unto our reason , and imposeth it self on our conscience , as
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useful and indispensably necessary, whilst it appears not onely as *an act of worship*, but *Organ of grace*, and instrument of much good unto the soul, the which though it doth not confer, *opere operato*, by meer application, as by any Physical power in it self, yet it is a moral instrument offering matter to the rational argumentations and discourses of a beleiving soul, either to the encouragement of his faith, or enforcement of duty, and is by divine institution Gods method and instrument whereby he hath graciously confirmed these priviledges, and so it is necessary not onely *ratione precepti*, a *commanded duty*: but also *medii*, as a *moral means* to be managed by meditation and *Divine method* prescribed by the Lord, as that whereby we may claim his promise and conclude a relation to, and fitness for communion with him, and without which we cannot ordinarily expect his blessing, and be accounted his people; and what he doth in extraordinary cases, where he providentially supersedeth an Ordinance, as by *untimely death*, and the like, doth no way abate the *dignity*, or abstract from the *necessity of washing the body with pure water*, by the Sacrament of Baptism; the conviction of this truth will call for a constant and reverent attendance on Baptism, and conscientious use of it in all convenient opportunitie that God shall give us; and check the contempt, and prophane neglect thereof that is not a little abounded (to our shame and with grief of heart be it spoken) in the midst of us: were men but rightly affected with the nature of Baptism, they would see in it *beauty*, and of it a great *necessity*. Was not washing of the flesh

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necessary, and the holy Garment glorious in Israel
 because they fitted for approach to God, and en-
 trance into the holy place? if men were but really
 convinced that *the body washed with pure water* was a
ground of assurance, because a *qualification of access*
to God; that Baptism is the onely *band of union* and
 door of admission into the Church, the formal con-
 secration to the service of the living God, what an
 esteem of baptism must needs possess their hearts,
 and make them not content without, but careful to
 pursue it; as seeing into Gods presence there is no
 approach to such as are not sanctified by the *washing*
of water through the Word? but a pressing unto
 Gods Ordinances, not thus prepared, must be a
presumption, no less then damnable; nay how would
 the sence of Baptism affect the heart with joy, whilst
 thereby we are made *Members of Gods Church* (an
 higher priviledge then the Coronation of a King)
 and made fit for the worship of an holy God; the
 ground of all alacrity and boldness in the use of his
 Ordinances? How must such a soul say, *what a happy*
condition am I now in, who through Grace have my
body washed with pure water, and joyned to the
household of faith, and sanctified for the service of
that consuming fire and Holy God, whom to approach
unto, is the greatest happiness man can enjoy; whilst
others are a far off, debarred the Holy things of grace,
and dare not intermeddle with the holy things of God,
nor draw nigh unto his holy place; I come with freedom
into his Sanctuary, and claim the liberty and priviledges
theresof by vertue of Baptism, that covenant of God
which is upon my flesh, in this therefore I will rejoyce
before the Lord. Nay, the sence of Baptism as a qua-
 lification

lification for access to God, would set our hearts into a reverent use, and dreadful attendance on the administration of it to others; whilst the *Element* is weak and simple, its use and end must make it glorious and powerful; whilst common washing is contemptible, a bathing the flesh at the door of the Tabernacle in order to an entrance into the holy place, and appearance before God is dreadful; though Wax and Parchment are poor and vile, base and common commodities, most shops afford Commodities much higher prized, yet these conjoynd by the hand of Majesty to make a Patent, Deed, or *Magna Charta* to secure some grant, privilege, or great revenue, is of much more worth and value, and received with more reverence and esteem; if we look on water, we see it is an *Element* as low, as common, as mean in our esteem, as ordinary in mens use; and this is ready to raise in our hearts contemptible thoughts, and make us say, what a *beggerly Element* and *base Administration* is this? What profit can be in the Application of a few drops of water? But when we shall consider that water is applyed by vertue of Gods command, as a most sacred Ordinance, to signifie the blood of Christ, whereby we are cleansed from all sin; to seal unto us the Covenant of Grace and all its privileges of Salvation; to set us in union with the Church, to the enjoyment of all Gospel Ordinances; and Sanctifie us as a peculiar people, that may and must draw nigh to God in assurance of faith; what lustre doth there appear in the Ordinance? what reverence doth then raise our spirits? what high and honourable regard do we then see we owe unto

unto this common and contemptible act of Baptism? oh what prayers for efficacy? what praises for enjoyment? what pleasure in administration? must the consecrating, qualifying and soul-encouraging assuring nature of Baptism effect in all such as are seriously affected with Gods holiness and the order of approach to him? unto all such Baptism is no carnal beggerly and unprofitable Element, but a glorious, Spiritual, Evangelical Administration of exceeding dignity; no Church complement and matter of indifferency that may or may not be used without any damage, but a compleat duty by reason of Divine command and its own due nature, disposing man into such a devout relation to God, and so of indispensable necessity.

Use 2. Is of Reproof, justly to blame that disesteem and disregard of Baptism that is to be found among us; our age of liberty hath set us so loose to Gospel Ordinances, that many can be not onely content without them, but also readily run into the contempt of them; how few in the midst of us understand the nature and seek the use of Baptism as a ground of faith, and Ordinance of Consecration, and so of confident access to God? mens principles and practice doth proclaim their palpable ignorance of such priviledges possessed by the body washed with pure water: How many (to our shame, and with grief be it spoken) do use Baptism as a meer Church complement, and convenient Ceremony? to the content of their Wives, Kinsfolk, Friends or Neighbours, bring their Children to be Baptised, without any awe of an Ordinance of God upon their Spirit; or apprehension

prehesion of advantage to be by Baptism conferred ; or design and intencion of solemn dedication of their children to God , and his service ; and so to have Gods name and covenant stamped upon their flesh ? and them fitted for access to God in the Assemblies of his people ? hence it is that they are at cost and care for the civilities that attend the Baptism of their children , but as for the *Solemn praises of God*, for the *blessing of the Covenant* , *prayers for a blessing* on an Ordinance , and careful *instruction* of their Baptized children in the consecrating nature of Baptism , the *boldness* it creates , and the *duty of access to God* it imposeth , these come not into his thoughts , cost him no care or pains , his friends gone , and work done , he thinks himself well rid of a piece of trouble , and pursues that days enjoyments to no more advantage : nay how many sit so luke-warm in minds and affections to *Baptism* , that they think it to be a meer Ceremony , and matter of indifferency , *if their body be washed* they are content , but they know no good it hath done them ; and if it *be not washed* they are as well pleased , they see no loss they undergo by the want of it ? they can accompany with the baptized or unbaptized in the Assemblies of Gods people , and Administrations of grace ; they matter not an outward ceremony , but look after the inward and hidden man of the heart ; *true and real Grace without any outward Ordinance* , shall be the ground of their communion ; they say , *Circumcision or Uncircumcision avails not to them* ; must it not be concluded that these men yet need to be informed in the first rudiments of the *Doctrine of God* , even the

the *Doctrine of Baptism* ? and to be convinced that the *body washed with pure water*, is the qualification prescribed by a glorious God, to consecrate such as with confidence approach before him ? and so the contempt of it must needs be prophane and dangerous ; Nay, too many in the midst of us, open their black mouths, and give their blasphemous tongues the liberty of *decrying and vilifying* this Holy Ordinance, enveighing against it as a carnal, base, beggerly Element, and *Excrementious Ordinance*, an Antichristian Idol, and piece of abomination ; so horribly prophane and impudent do impostors grow by liberty, that they will outface God, and speak blasphemously of Divine Institution, and the appointed order of access to God in the assemblies of his people. Nay, what shall we say to the *rude recession* of people from the application of baptism to others ? or their *irreverent attendance on it*, as if it concerned not them, or were no part of *Gods Worship* ? and of those eminent pretenders unto Saint-ship, who *disown the relation of men Baptized to God*, and themselves (as the people of God) *standing at a distance* from the consecrated to the Lords service, as if *profane* and altogether *strangers to the Covenant* ? and many other profane carriages that are insuitable to so holy an Ordinance ; But *Generalia non pungunt* ; not to confine myself to Generals, which will hardly reach the heart and consciences. Give me leave to take notice of those principles and practises that are inconsistent with this holy use and nature of *Baptism*, and do indeed profanly militate against this Doctrine that teacheth you, *That Baptism, or the body washed with*
pure

pure water, is the especial qualification of confidence in approach to God in the Assemblies of his people: and I shall Rank them into this order, and make them know by these names:

They are such who,

1. *Dictate to the unbaptised a liberty of access to God.*

2. *Disown and decline their Baptism in their approaches to God.*

3. *Disregard Baptism administred to others.*

4. *Disesteem the priviledges conferred by Baptism.*

5. *Declare not to theirs baptised, the dignity and duty of Baptism.*

6. *Deny the Baptised the liberty of access to God in the assemblies of his people, and use of his Ordinances.*

Unto each of these this Doctrine doth speak reproof and blame, as we shall note in the particular consideration of them. And

First, If the washing of the body with pure water, or baptism, be the especial qualification of confident approach to God in the assemblies of his people, then generally are they to blame, who do *Dictate to the unbaptised a liberty of access to God*. Many in this Remissive age of ours, can make baptism a matter of no moment in their Communion; they can hold Communion with baptised or unbaptised, and cry out, *Circumcision or uncircumcision is to them nothing*; as if this Ordinance of baptism were rendred indifferent as the nullified Ordinance of *circumcision*. And they themselves complain of rigor

and severity in such as impose *Baptism* as the ground of communion in the Church, and decline the administration of holy things to the *unbaptized*; these call for inward grace, the answer of a good conscience, Real love to Jesus Christ, and then they care not whether they ever pass under the outward Ordinance or be *baptized*: And herein the luke-warmness of private men is not so much to be blamed, for that the leaders of the people cause them to erre; some that stand in the midst of you as guides, and profess themselves Ministers of Jesus Christ, and teachers of the truth, have not been affraid (if I may not say ashamed) positively to affirm, and (in this Pulpit) plainly to teach as the very mind of God, That *Baptism* is not the ground of Church

J. S. Communion, but real grace, the answer of a good Conscience, by the Resurrection of Christ from the dead: and therefore did offer and affirm, That although a man were altogether ignorant of the Doctrine of Baptism, and had never passed under that outward Ordinance, yet he could own him as a member of the Church, hold communion with him, and admit him to all the Ordinances of Jesus Christ; and much to this purpose, which stands in a direct contradiction to this truth, and declared use of Baptism. For if it be the qualification of access to God, the door of admission into the Assemblies of Gods people, and way of consecration unto Communion in the holy things of God: must it not needs be *profane-ness* to administer the holy things of God to such as are not thus qualified? and *presumption* to invite such unto the participation of them? But a little to expostulate with the asserters of this *Baptism* sub-
verting

verting notion : Will God be worshipped by outward ordinances ? and must these Ordinances be enjoyed in order, some preparing for participation to others ? Is Baptism the first Ordinance of the Gospel ? Initiating Seal of the Covenant ? Door of admission into the Church ? and Method of Matriculation into the household of Faith ; and way of consecration unto Communion with God and his people ? Is it not reckoned among the first principles of the word of God, to be learned by all Disciples entred into Christs school ? and if so, must it not be horrid profaneness to decry the knowledge of Baptism and its Doctrine ? To expose communion with God and his people to common hands never sanctified, and by *body washing* separated from the heap of mankind ; on whom *Baptism* never stamped holiness ? and gross impiety to fling open the door of Gods House, that Dogs and Swine may enter at pleasure, there being no *baptismal badge* of distinction between them and the children of God ? Is it not great prodigality to offer the priviledges of the Covenant to every hand, not having any sealed interest whereon to claim ? Is it not grievous presumption to decline the directed order of the Gospel, and dispence the holy things of God in a way and method contrary to that whereby Christ and his Apostles either enjoyed or administred them ? Must not this needs be Superstition, Will-worship, a laying wast Divine directions, and running from the Rule of Scripture, and due method of holy things ? Must not God in his jealousy needs arise and say to such Ministers as to the Keepers of the Sanctuary, *Ezek. 44. 7.* *You have enough of all abomonations, seeing ye have*

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brought into my house the unbaptised in flesh and in spirit. To what end do these men baptise any, or urge any to be baptized; In this assertion baptism is proclaimed a matter of indifferency, nay, a meer nullity, an action of no advantage, administred to no end: for if it confer not outward priviledges, it will never conveigh inward grace. And thus the institutions of the Lord Jesus stands charged with *folly and vanity*, and the Ordinances of the Gospel are made complements, and bootless Ceremonies; but rather the spirit of seduction is evidenced to be prophane, notoriously wicked, willingly withstanding Divine Order, and in the name of God exposing the holy God to irreverent, rude approaches, and his Seals and sanctifying Ordinance to scorn and contempt.

Nor is this guilt thus charged in the least extenuated by the qualification required and propounded as the ground of Communion; viz. *Real Grace, the answer of a good conscience, by the Resurrection of Christ from the dead*; for I never yet found this propounded in Scripture as the ground of Church *Communion*; nor is it discernable by every eye of every common beleiver, who are to see such sanctified unto God, to whom they do joyn themselves; Nay, the very Stewards of the mysteries of God have not that Spirit of infallible discerning the truth of grace: Gross *Hypocrites* have been by the very Apostles of Jesus Christ baptized and admitted into the Church: and so will be by all that administer holy things, for *Hypocrites* void of true Grace, must be found in the Church, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall come to Judgment. And if it could be known, yet by what

what authority is *inward Grace* divided from the *outward Ordinance*, and opposed thereunto? Those things which God hath joyned together, shall any man dare to divide asunder? and can true grace consist with ignorance of the Doctrine of Baptism, and neglect and contempt of the least Ordinance of Jesus Christ, and inversion of the order of the Gospel? But is not this most graceless Chymistry so to spiritualize Gospel dispensation as to deifie every Minister that hath the charge of the Sanctuary? Nay, every beleiver that must hold communion in the Ordinances of the Gospel, by making them *searchers of the heart*, and infallible discerners of Real grace, the ground of Church communion, and to juttle out the washing of the body which God hath made the ground of confidence in access to him in the assemblies of his people.

Secondly, The second sort to be reprov'd as contradictory to this consecrating, faith-encouraging Ordinance of *washing the body with pure water*, are such as *Disown and decline Baptism, in their drawing nigh to God, in the assemblies of his people*: Like Priest, like people; if men that call themselves Ministers and Teachers shall with black mouths *blaspheme Baptism*, it cannot but meet with people that shall profane, contemn, and cast off that holy Ordinance. If Teachers shall dare in the Name of the Lord to declare, *That water-baptism is not the ground of communion with the Church visible*; no marvel if men do flight Baptism in seeking such communion; nay, it were a marvel if some should not sinfully reject and renounce it; for he is a mean man that

that draweth not some clients after him : Are there not many in the midst of us that make their way to God by *renouncing their Baptism* , when once their fancy doth but dictate to them a vanity in that outward Ordinance , and their tongues are filled with villifying invectives , calling it *beggarly Element* , *carnal ordinance* , *outward and groundless ceremony* , *badge of Antichrist* , *Superstitious administration* ; their hearts are as full of joy as they can hold , now they are full of courage , can come with freedom and full assurance to God , being , as they pretend *baptised with the Spirit and Fire* ; now they boldly joyn themselves to that assembly they call the *Church of God* , and despising all outward Ordinances, their formal admission must be by a full *renunciation of their baptism* and all carnal acts of worship (as they phrase it) that they may serve God in Spirit.

This generation of men must needs appear most grossly ignorant or greatly deluded as to the method of approach to God , and manner of worship to be done unto him. Unto them I would demand, If they be guided by Scripture directions (not Enthusiasmes, and pretend Inspirations) whether Scripture doth not declare, That *divided man must make no approach to God* ? the Spirit of all flesh will be adored with outward Acts of worship which he himself hath appointed. Hath God commanded baptism to no *use or end* ? May bodies not *consecrated* come nigh to holy presence ? Must not the Lords immediate attendants be distinguished from the rest of the world by some Livery that is obvious and to be seen by every eye ? Can the Spirit and sacred Ordinances of God stand opposite one to the other, and not consist

ent each with other ? And must sincere grace share stakes with God , giving man the *body* and, God the Spirit ? The Devil may be content with the half of man, for he well knows by that mean he doth possess the whole , for God will have all or none : They that will draw nigh to his Sanctuary must *love him with all their might , heart , soul , and strength* : they that will wait on him , must worship him in *Body and spirit* ; They that walk as the redeemed of Christ, must *glorifie him with soul and body , which is their reasonable Sacrifice*, Rom. 12. 1. *For both were bought with a price*, 1 Cor. 6. 20. God will part with no part of his purchase , and hath therefore prescribed outward acts of adoration to be bodily performed in the sincerity of Spirit , and appointed the *washing of the body with pure water* to consecrate and stamp holiness on the outward man , as well as the *sprinkling of the heart* for the inward. *The exercise of the body* in the outward Acts of worship without the Spirit , is *plain Hypocrisie* ; and the *exercise of the spirit* without the bodies subjection to outward Ordinances, is *positive profaneness* ; such is the Souls influence on the Body , that if awfully apprehend Majesty it will make the bodily members to express it : In vain is hearts subjection pretended where the yoke of outward Ordinances is broken from the neck : what likelihood of loyalty from such as scorn the livery ? sad is that Sanctity that sets at enmity Gods Spirit and sacred Ordinances : Cursed is that cry of holiness that cryeth down Divine Order and Ordinances : *Rebellious* is that Assembly whose Incorporation is a renunciation of the matter and Method of Gods Worship : Dreadful must needs be
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Gods approach to that people that draw nigh unto him not duly consecrated to that end by baptism, and touch the holy things of God in his Assembly, not having the *body washed with pure water*. I have lost my little skill in Scripture-Calculatation, if such perish not in the gain-saying of *Korah*, and occasion not a *Perzuzzah* in Israel.

Whilst some disown Baptism as an outward Ordinance, by the Spirit of Familism disowning all outward administrations; There are others that will joyn with us in condemning them, and consent that God must be worshipped by bodily *acts of Religion*, yet they find no way of access to God, but by *receding from the Baptism they had received*, and disowning the consecrating, Faith-encouraging use of the *washing of their bodies in pure water*, to which they have been subject: These are our *Antipedobaptists* become actual *Anabaptists*, who (quarrelling at Infants interest unto Baptism, and the Administrators thereof) do disown all relation they have had to the Church, and the priviledges they enjoyed by their Baptism; and disavowing the holiness thereby conferred, they declare themselves to have been *cozened* when *Christned*: and although they have sometime deemed themselves the people of God, sanctified by the *washing of water*, in Covenant with God, and sweet Communion with his heople; Now they declare themselves to be *aliens and strangers to the Commonwealth of Israel*, without hope, without God, and without Christ in the world; and therefore renouncing this Baptism they seek another way of access to God; and by an *imagined Baptism* of their own creation, they encourage their Spirits, and
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stamp holiness upon themselves, and pretend to joyn themselves to the assemblies of the Lords people, declaring all others to be *Dogs*, and onely themselves the *children of the Kingdom*; all others to be in the *high ways and Hedges*, and themselves the onely Church of *Christ* to whom men must be joyned on pain of eternal Damnation: When I consider these men, I cannot but consider the impetuous violence of an Erroneous judgement in hurrying to irregular practise, and the giddy preposterous zeal that is produced by Reason-darkning fancy: this carriage doth plainly bespeak these men to be greatly irrational, and grossely ignorant.

First, *They appeared to be greatly Irrational*, and that because they nullifie Gods Ordinances by mistaken or miscarried circumstances, which no way destroy their essence: Their ground is, *Infants ought not to be Baptized; and they were Baptized in their Infancy; their ignorant parents in their ignorance did superstitiously cause them to be sprinkled by some unworthy Sir John or other, and hereby they were cozened; but now they thank God they see the superstition of Baby-sprinkling, and therefore will have their bodies washed, and joyn themselves to the Baptised Saints.* Unto this Plea of theirs, I wish they had reason enough to see the irrationality of it: for presuppose (which is not true) that *Infants have no right to Baptism*; it will not thence follow that Infant-baptism is superstitious, void and null: For *Baptism* is Gods Ordinance, Christs own Institution; *Age or infancy* are but circumstances directing the Subject to whom it is applyed, and is not essential to the Ordinance:

if Baptism be a worship according to the mind of Christ, then *Infant Baptism* is out of all danger or possibility of will-worship; in case *infans* were not (as undoubtedly they are) within the Verge of the Covenant, yet their baptism can be no Will-worship, for we set not up the Ordinance we apply to them, but make application of the Ordinance, *Christ instituted*; so that our utmost guilt is *misapplication* of worship instituted by God; not *devising any worship of our own heads*; these men do irrationally charge the *corruption* of an ordinance, and *misapplication* of an Institution with *Superstition*; and this corruption in a circumstance they imagine to nullifie the Ordinance, and improve to a *nonentity* of their baptism; most irrationally making the Age *essential to the Ordinance*, which God never did so appoint in either Old or New Testament-times, either in the initiating Seal of Circumcision or baptism: God did indeed direct Circumcision to be applied at the eighth day, but the *direction of the Age* is distinct from the *institution of the Ordinance*, and not of the essence thereof, otherwise none might be Circumcised after the eighth day to have their Circumcision valid and of force: under the New Testament we have neither *institution of the Age*, nor subsequent *direction for it*, save onely the *qualification of the Subject*; as being made Disciples, brought into a *propriety to the promise*, and the like, of what age soever, unless our Anabaptists will make Christs Baptism the *institution of the Ordinance and Age* to which it is to be applied; and then I do believe their latter Baptism will be as void as the former, for I believe they are younger or elder, very few of the
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just direct Age of the Lord Jesus when baptized; so that the Age can no way be made essential to the Ordinance: the *corruption circumstantial* will not bring upon it a *nonentity* and necessity of rebaptization: though they might have cause to bewail the sin of their parents in corruptly *misapplying Gods Seal*, what necessity is there of plucking it off, and Cancelling the Covenant of God to them confirmed? I cannot beleive that if a Jew had been Circumcised before the eighth day, that he would have renounced the Circumcision because *misapplied* in point of time by his neglective parents: deviations from order may be profaneness to be rebuked, but cannot be *destructive to the Ordinance* that the privileges thereof should be lost, and it be reiterated: I do not beleive that these men will Disfranchise themselves of the privileges of a Free-man of *London* though they were incorporated before the age directed by the rules of the Chamber for admitting Free-men. Methinks their Reason should be a Chancery of more equity then to cut themselves off from the Congregation of Gods people, and cast off the liberty of access, because of their unseasonable and *too early Baptism*: if the Church on such a miscarried circumstance should disfranchise them, or deny their relation to the Household of Faith, she were deservedly censured for cruel severity, and her *summum jus* must needs be deemed *summa injuria*: the greatest wrong is to punish *failed Circumstances* with the highest severity due to the greatest crimes. Onely blind zeal and irrationall folly is censorious to themselves to disown their own interest on such a ground as will not warrant the Church to deprive

them of it : Self-execution under the greatest guilt, differs little from murther : but it must needs be sinfully violent, when extended in measure beyond the nature of the fault : Self-excommunication on so slight a ground cannot but be the sting of an awakened conscience apprehensive of the priviledges lost : the out cry of such a conscience must needs be this ; O wretched ! *my Parents misapplied the Seal, and therefore I have cast off the Covenant by my own will, and deprived my self of those blessed enjoyments the hand of justice never demanded from me : Oh cruelty ! self-cruelty ! How justly might God say Amen to thy self, censure and blind thee under thy loss for ever.*

But to extenuate this irrationality in the rejection of their Baptism received in infancy they (endeavouring to master by number of exceptions under the want of force) further plead, *Why, but we were baptized by some unworthy Minister, and in a superstitious manner, with the ceremonies of the Church, and sign of the cross :* and therefore we cannot make that baptism a ground of Faith in the approach to God : Hereby they do but act their irrationality the further ; for suppose ye were baptized by any unworthy Minister, yet he was a Minister : though the essence of the Ordinance may depend on the *Authority*, yet not on the *Dignity* of the *Administration*. The wickedness of an Embassador maketh not his Embassie concluded to be void and vain ; the impression of a lawfully commissioned Judge though he be unjust, is valid and of force ; the Grant of a cruel King and profane Prince will be by these men admitted as the substantial binding Charter of the peoples

peoples Priviledges : we read often of the profaneness of the Priests of Israel, but never of a non-entity brought upon Gods Ordinances in their hand : If they be in *Moses Chair*, though we must not *do as they do*, we are bound to the *attention and obedience of what they say* : it is not impossible for a man to *Preach to others*, and *himself be a cast-away* : I never read that the Baptism of those baptized by the unworthy hand of *Judas* was ever pronounced *void or null*. A pure Ordinance is unhanfom in a profane hand, but yet its essence is not impaired, it is Gods Ordinance effectual to its end. So that if they were baptized by Ministers though unworthy (wherein I wish charity be not violated, for that many know not who they were they do censure as unworthy ; nay, some worthy men to themselves so known, they now call unworthy) it is a corruption consistent with the essence of the Ordinance, not any way destructive to its being. The same is to be said for the annexed Ceremonies that they were *profanely added*, but yet did not *nullifie the Ordinance*, but it stands in full force as a ground of confidence in access to God.

But secondly, As they appear greatly irrational in inferring more then their premises will allow, so they are *Grossly ignorant* ; nay I fear many *wilfully* shutting their eyes may be charged to be *grossly obstinate* : They renounce their baptism under the notion of *Superstition*, not considering they *run into the sin of Sacriledge* ; charity must perswade us these men understand not the *method*, and *ministration of the Covenant of Grace*, otherwise they could never charge
Infant.

Infant Baptism with *superstition*; (which is the very application of Gods Ordinance to its proper subjects) and so Sacrilegiously rob God, his Church, believing parents, and their children of those holy duties and Dignities that belong unto them. Have we not before noted, that they who are in Covenant with God ought to be Baptized? and is not this the principle wherein we all agree? And if these men know any thing of the method and ministration of the Covenant, must they not needs confess, That the *natural issue of one or both believing Parents are in Covenant*? as we have before proved: and so fit *subjects for Baptism*, that they may and must be partakers of the first *initiating Seal*, of which God hath made them capable in their Passive age and estate: Can any stand convinced that such infants are as soon as born the Lords Heritage, Psal. 127. 3. *The Lords servants*, Lev. 25. 42. *Children begotten to him*, Ezek. 16. 20. 21. *Holy ones*, Rom. 11. 16. 1 Cor. 7. 14. *Children of the Covenant*, Acts 4. 25. *To whom belongs the promise*, Act. 2. 28. *Interested in the priviledges of the people of God*, Mar. 10. 14. and withhold the Keeper of the Sanctuary and Stewards of Gods household from setting of Gods mark in his flesh, or withstand their dedication unto God? Must not we give *Cesar* the things that are *Cesars*, and God the things that are Gods? Will not God account it a *Robbery* that they which are his shall be withheld from him? Again, can any consider the issue of believing Parents to be the *Churches Children, begotten to the Lord*, Ezek. 16. 20. an *holy seed* scattered for her increase, and yet snatch them out of her armes, and cast them out of her bosome into the wide wilderness of the world? Shall not the

the Church lament and refuse to be comforted whilest she is bereaved of her babes, and as a Bear robbed of her whelps? Will not such robbery prove her ruine, and the drying up her seed hinder her increase, and make her barren and fruitless? Again, shall the children of such believing Parents be born members of the household of faith, and not be incorporated by Baptism? Shall Loyalty be their born duty, and not Gods Livery their dignity? Shall the Covenant of Grace be the Charter of their priviledge and the Seals not be applyed to them as they are capable of receiving them? Shall they be holy in their kind, and the badge of destination be denyed them? If any thing would make a new born babe to speak, sure this Sacriledge would do it: there is reason for the real demand that is fabled of one Rumball, Son to an English King, at Brackely in Northamptonshire, that as soon as he was born he requested to be baptized for that he was a Christian: Is it not a cruel sacriledge to shut out of the Ark of salvation, such whose title to entrance cannot be denied? Yet further, is Baptism the only visible evidence God hath given to parents of the extent of the Covenant to their children; and shall any deprive them of this reason of hope, cause of joy, ground of Faith in Prayer, and spur to duty in dedication to God, and education of their children for God? So that these things considered, such as on this ground of being Baptized in infancy do renounce their baptism, do out of ignorance of Gods Covenant commit most horrid Sacriledge by robbing God of his Heritage, the Church of children, and the benefits of the administration of Baptisme to infants (which by Gods grace I shall shew to be great) the children of be-
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lieving parents of their *Seal of the Covenant of which they are capable*, and their parents of that *ground of Faith* the administration of the Covenant doth award them : And so they give us cause not only to charge them with *irrationality* in fancying Gods holy Ordinance to be *superstition* ; but in the language of of the Apostle to say, *Thou that abhorrest Idols dost commit Sacrilege*, Rom. 2. 22. So that not only groundlessly, but even contrary to Divine method and order, they disowning the regular washing of their body in pure water, do divest themselves of that Seal of sanctity and vesture of holiness by which they were fitted for a confident approach to God : and decline the Assemblies of Gods people, in which alone the Lord is to be adored, and joyn themselves to *false assemblies*, where they are consecrated to, and come before God *in a way that is not of his appointment, nor can expect his approvement* ; how high soever false hopes and joyes may carry their spirits ? For those to whom they joyn, are *divided from the Church of Christ*, and void of all commission to administer the holy things of God : if you look at their *constitution*, you shal find it is no other then *self-congregation*, with the cry of *all the Lords people are holy*, and invectives against Aaron and Moses *as they who take too much upon them* ; the which I could never yet find warranted in Scripture, but is remarkably condemned in the *company of Korah* that were thus constituted : Ministerial authority is no less essential to constitute a Church of Christ, then Magistratical to constitute a Corporation or Company ; my little skill in Politicks could never see that *self-congregation could constitute any body, but that which is seditious or Schismatical* ? And as Ko-

rah seems to have been the Counsellor of their Constitution, so *Jeroboam* seems to be of their Consecration, for he that will, may make himself a Priest, even the lowest of the people are Ministers to the Lord, un-called and unqualified they presume to administer holy things, which is a shadow and appearance of Divine worship, but indeed a real building of Altars, besides the Altar of the Lord; and gives just cause to the people of God (truly pious and pursuing the truth of his Ordinances) to pray as the Church in *Jeroboams* dayes. Tell me, O thou whom my Soul loveth where thou feedest thy flock, where thou makest them to rest at noon, for why should I turn aside by the flocks of thy companions? (to seem and pretend to be) *Gant. 1. 7.* So that their exchange of the baptism they renounce, for that they now receive, is a profaning of themselves, who once were an holy people to the Lord, and by false wayes of sanctity to set themselves at a greater distance from God, and to shake, nay to rake up the Foundations of their Faith; and exchange their assurance rightly grounded on their baptism, for a fond presumption flowing from Sacrilegious notions and false worship, which must at the last fall into the hands of the living God, and be found as stubble before a consuming Fire, because unconsecrated in the presence of an holy God: for never to be sanctified, and after to be profaned is all one in its event and issue; they that contemn, and they that cast off Gods holy Ordinance shall fall into the same condemnation.

The third sort to be reprov'd as carrying Contradictority to this qualification to confident approach to God, are such as disregard the Administration of

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baptism unto others : These acknowledge the use and benefit of having the body washed with pure water, but by the rudenesse of their behaviour do declare themselves *ignorant or insensible of its holy nature and consecrating use*. These are such as *drive the Sacrament*, in its administration *into corners* and *continue not in the Congregation*, in the administration of it ; they think it is convenient children be baptized, but the *solemnity thereof* is to them *strange and needles*; they will call some few friends together, and call in to baptise it any Minister that flubbers over the act as easily as they desire, & in a way of complement get the work done , never considering it is a *Church Ordinance*, and of due belongs to the *whole assemblie*, not particular families or persons ; nor with any reverence composing themselves to a *solemn and Religious act of dedication to God*, many in this case carry toward the Ordinance as a meer *Complement* ; to please wife , kinsfolk or neighbours they will have their Children Baptized, and the civilities thereunto belonging being past they think themselves well rid of a piece of trouble, and never devote themselves to any Religion in the application of this Ordinance : *Incorporation into the household of Faith* ; *Dedication to an holy God* is not in their thoughts, their *praises* proclaim not any sense of a Covenant priviledge; nor doth their *Prayers* pursue God for his blessing on his own Ordinance; they break not through any difficulties to present their children to God in the Assemblies of his people; they think not the *silent suffrages* of the Society of any moment in the incorporation of a Member ; or their *supplications* of any virtue to an Ordinance of sanctification;

fication; but as unaffected with these things, they get the work done, the child Baptized, they neither care where, how, or by whom, for when its done they have done.

And others are in this respect no lesse blame-worthy, who *turn their backs rudely and irreverently when Baptism is administred*; whilst the Word, Prayer, and other Ordinances are in hand, they sit composedly in the Congregation; but when Baptism comes in hand they posit out of the Church; as if this were *not worth their attendance, or tended not any way to their advantage*. Unto these I would say, *Is not Baptism an Ordinance of God and act of worship to his people?* Is it not an Ordinance of *incorporation into the body of the Church of God*, of which thou art a member? oughtest not thou to take them into society, and by thy presence to witness their relation? thou givest them little honour who hast not patience to attend their solemn admission into the Society of the Saints: Is not Baptism *the Seal of the Covenant, the Sanctifying Ordinance of access to God?* Administred it not matter of meditation concerning *Mans Guilt, Gods Grace, the Covenant of Salvation between God and man*, whereby thou mayest be edified? Is not the Baptism of a Christian of high *concernment*? doth it not tye the baptized to *great and many engagements*? Are they not *obnoxious to many temptations*, to violate the Covenant? Is not Baptism the Ordinance of holiness? Gods blessing needful to make it *holy*, and prayers of the Church the way to obtain Gods blessing? that thou turnedst away and followest not the Ordinance with thy prayer? Can a conscience awed by the sanctity of any Ordinance and

affected with the holiness of God to be adored, dispense with the neglect and contempt of other Ordinances equally holy, nay, in order the first of, and that without which, other Ordinances must not be used?

The fourth sort of such whose practise doth militate with the consecrating nature of baptism, are such *who disesteem their own baptism owned and adhered unto* : many have had their bodies washed with pure water, and would not be without their *Baptism* for all the world ; but yet as for any great benefit they ever received by it, they know no reason they have to esteem it at so high a rate : They never read any thing of Divine favour in their Baptism, nor from it reaped either counsel or comfort ; the reflections of duty and dignity are to them strange and unusual, Baptism having once passed on their bodies comes no more into their minds. It is not to them any engagement to, or encouragement in duty or drawing nigh to God ; the which as it *exposeth the Ordinance to contempt not imaginable*, so it bespeaks such souls to be *unspeakably ignorant or insensible of the nature, use and end of the washing of the body with pure water* ; for can any soul that understands and believes Baptism to be a *pledge of divine affection*, live under it without observation of Gods peculiar love to them above others who want it ? Can any stand convinced, That the *Seal of God is in their flesh*, live and not lay claim to God by so visible a ground of claim ? Can any say that by Baptism they are *purged from the corruptions that are in the world through lust*, and live in sin ? Can any consider hereby they are called out of the World, and consecrated to
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the worship of one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and neglect directed acts of Adoration, the holy service that is assigned by their Lord and King? much less should such Apostatize from the Profession of that name, and run into open Rebellion against him with whom they stand confederated, bound in Covenant? can any think Baptism to be the *bond of union* and *nerve of incorporation* with the Church of Christ, and not *sympathize* with her under all the changes of her condition? much less can such make *Schisms*, or *separation from her body*, and forsake the assembling of themselves together as the manner of some is: Much is the advantage Baptism once received may administer to a soul all his days, *if by rational acts of faith it were improved*: either as a *moral instrument*, or outwards sign exhibited matter of meditation, or as a *Divine Ordinance* and Seal of the righteousness by Faith, established to assure man of the promises of Grace and Salvation: And yet (to our shame be it spoken) how little thereof is reaped by regardlessus? Baptism is a memorial of our misery, and Gods mercy; a manifest expression of that natural uncleanness which sets us at a distance from God, and eminent act of sanctifying unto an access to God; and yet how many make no use of it, nor find matter of meditation by it? God hath appointed it an instrument of Regeneration and Salvation, how few find these effects produced by it? nay, improve it thereunto? It is that Seal that assures of interest in all the promises of grace, yet when do men propound it to themselves as a ground of faith, or plead it in prayer? How many live in such profaneness, that the Church may charge them

them to have forgotten that they were purged from their old sin; and God may complain that they have broken their baptismal Oath: yet Baptism is to them a mean and weak argument of conviction? When I consider the dulness of profane Christians under the enforcements of their baptism, even Ministerially urged, I could wish according to the sometime custome used in the Primitive times of the Church, when men are baptised they might leave behind them a white garment, as a witness of their baptism, that so we might upbraid wicked men, as the Deacon of the Church did *Elpidophorus* when revolted from the faith, saying, O, *Elpidophorus*, *I will keep this white garment as a monument against thee to all eternity*: When I consider the Scripture aggravating guilt with this circumstance, they *have forgotten that they were purged*; it dictates to my mind that the condemnation of Christians will be more grievous because of their Baptism; *If this water quench not lust, it will make wrath burn more vehemently*: Though I cannot consent to the Novations cruel and groundless conclusion, *That sin after baptism is unpardonable*; I dare affirm, *That every sin not resisted by Baptism will be more then ordinarily damnable to the baptized*. What an Answer to every temptation unto sin is the soul furnished withal, that is apprehensive that in Baptism he did renounce the *Flesh, the World and the Devil*, and devote himself to a conformity to the death of Christ, and stands dedicated to an holy God, in whose presence he may not presume defiled with sin? This Argument if improved by a rational act of faith is of more advantage, because it is plain and common; ready at hand

hand to reflect, and easie to be understood; and obvious to the eye of men without, and within the Church, by which we are liable to be upbraided by the very enemies of Christ: That we are baptized the whole Church will witness, and shall not we have recourse unto our Baptism as a bar to our profaneness? Shall Circumcised *Israel* live in the vileness and vanity of the uncircumcised Gentiles? And hath God made baptism a badge of distinction between the holy and prophane, and shall we not make it a bar of division between their unclean Lusts and our holy lives? to live without mortification of sin, and quickening to all holy duties, doth clearly declare we have never yet understood the nature of Baptism, nor used it to its end.

As this deadness in sin, so the Despondency of the Spirit in Duty, to which even the best of men are subject, doth witness a disesteem and disregard of their Baptism, of which they can sometime boast, though in it they cannot rejoyce. A right apprehension and real sense of Baptism as the qualification of confident approach to God would dissolve many doubts, if but duely urged by faith. Ordinances of God are given for our encouragements, but rational acts of faith must pass from us to enforce them to their end: What is said of the Word is true of Baptism, it profits not, because not mingled with Faith in them that hear it; many a sad soul comes trembling into Gods presence, and goes more troubled out, and the reason is, they do not rightly husband Gods ordinances to the soul; they pass from Ordinance to Ordinance, but never consider the one entitles to, and fits for the enjoyment of another:

nother ; They suck no sweetness from all Sacred administrations, sometimes then abstain from, and oftentimes approach to God in his Ordinances, and the discharge of holy duties, as *afraid* they have no right to, nor fitness for these priviledges, yet are *sanctified by the washing of water* ; they complain they see no interest in the Covenant, and yet *the Seal of the Covenant is in their flesh* ; they cry out they are aliens and strangers to the Commonwealth of Israel, and yet are *baptized into one body*, and incorporated into the Congregation of the Saints ; they dare not call God Father, yet were *children begotten unto him*, bear his mark, and as soon as born were by him owned and placed in the bosome of his Church, and do wear the coat he prepared for his *Joseph* : They see many good things promised in the Covenant, but know not how to claim any of them in Prayer, and yet they have the *Broad Seal of Heaven to secure their Title*. Unto these souls let me freely say, Shall God give you a ground of encouragement ? will you not use it ? Shall he call for an approach in full assurance, *for that the body is washed with pure water*, and will you not yield it ? Did God mock you when he gave you the dignity of Baptism, or is it not your madness that makes it not a check to your griefs, and curb to your fears ? Shall your practice proclaim the truth of that which the Papists have endeavoured to charge on the reformed Churches, viz, *That they make Baptism nudum signum, a bare empty sign of no use or advantage to the Soul* ? Is Gods seal in vain, and sanctification by the washing of water to no purpose ? and matriculation into his household a mat-

ter of no moment? that thou makest them no ground of Faith, nor encouragement to thy soul? Was not Circumcision of great benefit to the Jews? did not God claim them by it when gone astray from him? and they claim God when deserting them? Is that an engagement to divine faithfulness, and may not thy faith make it thy encouragement to appear before him? did God complement when he annexed Baptism to the Covenant, and called it, *The Seal of the righteousness of faith*? or dost not thou rather cozen thy self of the comforts the Ordinance, do really and according to divine designment exhibit? it is indeed true, Salvation is not conferred *opere operato*, by the Act done, and meer application of the water; yet it is thereby assured to the soul, that by acts of Faith shall duly argue its interest. The Privy-Seal is the clearest token of affection, and to be pursued, but is the Broad Seal of no authority or advantage to be retained and improved? the *outward Ordinance*, is not without inward grace to be depended on, as sufficient to Salvation, but inward grace duly reflects the outward Ordinance, as Gods great mercy, and the ground of faith and encouragement to itself: The Moral swasion of any Ordinance, is too short to sanctifie or solace any Spirit, without supernatural Grace; but supernatural grace comes not into any soul to convince or comfort but by a moral improvement of every Ordinance, by rational meditation of its nature, use and end, Many sit under Gods Ordinances, and make most sad complaints, they find no profit in them; when the reason is in themselves; they cry out God must do all, work in them

to will and to do at his own pleasure, which is indeed true; but they consider not Gods method of working grace, or comfort in any souls; he always deals with men like themselves as they are reasonable creatures, and have a power of discourse, and therefore his Ordinances are *moral instruments*, by due discourses to enforce their end; we have reason to check some under the Ordinances as the Disciples were checked from Heaven for their posture in the Lord his ascension, *Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing? this Jesus that is taken from you, shall so come as you have seen him go into Heaven,* Act. I. II. As if the voice had said, *Considerations of his return, better become you, then silent observations of his present going.* So I say, Why do many enjoy Gods Ordinances, and not go home and consider them? must we run so far from free will, as to run out of our wits? Let such men, as make not their Baptism a moral engagement to, and encouragement in their access to God, know, that they appear *ignorant or sinfully insensible of its nature*, and expose it to great contempt: Can any thing more easily cast a soul into contempt of an Ordinance, then its *unprofitableness and unusefulness*; The grand cause of all the blasphemy that our Age doth belch out against Baptism, is the *little benefit men finde it brings them*: Not by reason of any defect in the Ordinance, but their own neglect to improve it, as a ground of Faith, guard against sin, and special qualification of access to God.

The fifth sort, that carrie contradictorily to this consecrating nature of Baptism, are such, *who declare not to theirs baptized, the dignity and duty of their Baptisme.* Men do with much zeal present their children to Baptism, but never mind to acquaint them of their priviledge; or instruct them in the nature of so holy an Ordinance: they are carefull to bring them up to some Trade, or Calling; to acquaint them with all external rights and priviledges, and the past ground of claim, to all future injoyments in the world; but education *in the fear and nurture of the Lord,* is to them unusual; and the affecting them with *baptismal priviledges and Church Rites,* or the acquainting them with *Covenant interest and ground of claim,* as to spiritual mercies and soul enjoyment, is the last and least of their endeavours. Well may we observe, the men of this world are *wiser in their generations, than the children of the Kingdome.* Commonprudence, if Scripture were silent, would direct a more serious instruction of our children, in the nature of their Baptism: Shall they *be begotten to the Lord,* and not be made to know *whose children they are?* and how they came by that relation? Shall they *be incorporated into the body of the Church,* and not know *the family and household to which they belong?* Shall *holinesse* be stamped upon them, and they not be made to know that they are *out of the common lump and mass of mankind?* Shall the *Covenant of God be in their flesh,* and they not know the *Charter* sealed and conditions to be performed? In a word shall they be *sanctified* by the washing of water, and not made sensible, that they stand *consecrated unto holy service,* and *dedicated* to the worship of the holy God, Father,

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Son, and Holy Ghost? and therefore ought not to stain themselves with guilt, but carrie as an holy people peculiar to the Lord? that they must wait on him, because they wear his livery; and may worship in his presence with confidence, because their bodies have been washed with pure water. I did in the last branch of this Use, blame them that *disesteem and disregard their own Baptism*, and that was but the effect of this sin; Our progenitors neglected us, and we neglected our posterity, as to their instruction in the nature of divine Ordinances. How shall they esteem that, wherein they see no excellencie; or improve that priviledge, of whose nature they are ignorant? How shall they claim the promises, who neither understand *what they are*, or on *what ground to be claimed*? What conscience can they make of duty who do not know themselves under sacred obligation? What confidence can they have in accesse to God, who know not themselves consecrated? If men have in them parental affection to their children, and do care for their future good, we must needs conclude they sought no more in their Baptisme, than *friends satisfaction, and a formal Religious complement*, and see not any special Soul-saving priviledges thereby conferred? for charity forbids us to think they would bring up their children in the ignorance and incapacity of claiming such *high priviledges*, and rationally improving so *holy engagements*, if themselves were affected with them, or they had any sense of duty as to such *Religious education*; which should indeed spur their *natural affection* to the discharge thereof: Little do men consider that the same God that gave babes the *right* to the initiating
scales

seales of the Covenant, did provide *catechising*, as the way to make them know their priviledge. He to whom they are born, hath provided *milk* for their nourishment, no less then *meat* for stronger men; and hath committed them as his lambs, to the care of his Church, and charged it, as the duty of their Parents to *educate them in the fear and nurture of the Lord*: So that such Parents who do not seriously instruct their seed in the *solemn Bond* of their relation to God and his Church; the *suitable qualification* by which they are fitted for divine communion, and the *seal of the Covenant*, that assureth them of the high priviledges of Salvation: do not only *slight* this holy Ordinance of Baptism, but also sinfully *transgress* Gods command; shew their natural affection to be diverted from its right channel, *care for the chiefest good*; and set their children under an inevitable necessity of sleighting the Ordinance, and starting aside from God, to whom they know no relation: Wee find i tour grief, that our children are *prophane*, when it is no other than the production of *our own neglect*: We can easily complain of their impieties; but where is the man, that as soon as his child is sensible, doth season him with the knowledge of his miserie by sin, Gods mercy in the Covenant of Grace, and his special engagement to holiness, for that he bears on him the name of God from his very *birth*, and that *imprinted by his Baptisme*, when his body *was washed with pure water*.

The sixth and last sort, whose principles and practises do plainly militate against the nature of baptism, and clearly do contradict the same, are such,
who

who deny the baptized the liberty of access to God in the Assemblies of his people. This I well know to relate unto the most eminent professors of Gospel order, and pretenders unto piety, that are among us; and therefore the most tender rebuke will seem to be *railing violence and bitterness*: But be it what it will, sin against *Gods Ordinances* must not pass without a zealous and serious Reproof: Such among us as affect the term of *Congregational brethren*, in the gathering of their Churches, run into an extreame as far wide on the one hand, as the loose, levelling Familists and Anabaptists are on the other: these dictate a liberty of access to the unbaptized, and those deny it to the baptized. We must needs imagine they agree both in one principle, that *Baptism is not the ground of communion with the Church visible*, nor qualification of access to God; For if it be otherwise, as we have noted, it must be *prophaness* to admit without it; and they have need of good warrant that will acquit themselves from *impiety*, in excluding the baptized from these priviledges. That such are among us, who debar the baptized from their priviledges, is so obvious to every observant eye of the now only cryed up *Church way*, that I need not much urge demonstrations thereof: I well know some whose practice proclaim it, in their principles will disown it: but it is the property of that *congregating way*, to couch their principles until their practice have proved their truth and goodness, and proclaimed them to others; But if in the terms charged any shall deny this to be acted among us, I shall desire to understand why they declare privately, and publickly men baptized to be strangers to God and his Covenant? why do they
decline

decline Communion with, and a care of baptized souls, as members of the Church? and dictate a necessity of their coming into Church way and fellowship? and why do they direct other ways for admission of Church Members? is there any terms more ordinary in the mouths of the congregated Saints towards those whom they live amongst, than Dogs, without, unbelievers, not in a Church way? Do not the pastors of these private (it may offend if I say separate) Assemblies in their publique Ministry, speak unto their baptized hearts, as aliens and strangers to the Covenant and Common-wealth of Israel, men in the High-ways and Hedges? Do they not call them into their self congregated and constituted Churches, as the only Churches of Jesus Christ? Do not the particular members of these assemblies appropriate to themselves the Title of Saints, believers, the people of God, the brethren? If they know or deal with a man professing the same God and Christ, baptized, and of a godly conversation, but not in their Church way, they cannot know him in any Christian relation; but can oppose to him a member of their private Assembly, by the name of brother such an one----, as if the other were no brother: Nay further, do not they decline communion with the baptized even such whom they cannot charge with any visible prophaneness, and against whom the Church never proceeded in censure? Hence they withdraw themselves from publique assemblies in their special administration of Church priviledges, denominate themselves the Church, and decline all Church actions towards such as come not into their Church-ways; though their Pastors will possess the places,

places, and make a shift to compel the (late cried down) *parochial maintenance*, yet of the people in common they take no charge: *Brethren* will not own them as objects of first or second admonition; *Pastors* will neither admit to the Lords Table the unblameable parents, nor *Baptise* or *Catechise* their Children, nor exercise any act of discipline towards the disorderly, in order to their conviction and salvation; but in all things so demean themselves towards the *baptized* as men without the pale of the Church, meer heathen; for Church ministrations are as much reserved from them as from such who never yet had holiness stamped on them: And if any do incline to associate with them in the holy things of God, they must be *admitted Members*, and enter at the door of a *Church Covenant*, or mutual agreement among themselves, and declaration of the work of grace upon their hearts, and their experiences of God, which these *Congregational-men* have set up? If this dialect and deportment do not declare that liberty of access to God, in the Assemblies of his people is *denied to the baptized*, I know not how to judge it: And how this will consist with the nature, use and end of Baptism, I cannot discern: If by the washing of water, *we were sanctified*, how were we prophaned and again laid common? I never yet could understand any *divine rejection*; I am sure it is much contrary to Gods wonted method and patience, to cast off a people adhering to him, though subject to many *aberrations* and *vile actions* towards him; and the extraordinary pleasure of God is yet to be manifested: And if *God count us holy*, and continue the liberty of our access to him in his Ordinance,

dinance, they must produce a good commission that shall cast *us out, as prophane and unclean*, if they expect we should be therewithal contented: If Baptism do *incorporate into the Church of God*, doth it not intitle to all the priviledges of the Church, and bind us to use them, and the Church to allow us the use of them, according to our capacity? If we are *baptized into one body*, have we not the same relation to them that others have? Are we not all of one family, members of one body, and brethren, sons of the same Father? Ought not all the Church to be the Pastors charge? Is not the *rebuke of the disorderly*, his duty, as well as his *encouragement of the orderly*? Doth not Baptism so *knit us one unto another*, that we are bound to watch over one another, and do all brotherly duties? Why else doth the Apostle make it an Argument, there is *one Baptism, Eph. 4. we are all baptized into one body*? I would fain know of what use Baptism is to them? is it not the same to others baptized? To count the baptized *Dogs, men without*, to dislow the *brotherhood*, and the like, must needs deny that *Baptism is the door of admission into the Church*; and yet this in terms they will not say, though they carry towards them as without, and call them to be members of the Church, who already are members of the Church on as good a ground & as clear a method as themselves: If this be not a solecism in Christianity, I know not how to make any: As for their admission into the Church by *Covenant, Agreement, or Profession*, it is cleerly without *Scripture prescription, or primitive president*, that ever I could yet find: and I can deem it no other then an *humane invention* (if I may not call it superstition,

the countenance of which it bears in my eye, whilst it stands in the place of Baptism, and is made the onely way of consecration unto Church communion, whereby it plainly supplants Gods Ordinance.) These things I note, but cannot stand to debate, intending a reproof, not dispute, and to let men see the sinfulness of this *sacred way of Independency*, and gathering of Churches out of Churches, whilst it stands guilty of a contempt of *Gods way of access unto him*, and admission into his Church; of *censorious uncharitableness* towards their brethren invested with the reason of relation to the Lords people; and of *constitution of Church Membership*, in a way of meer humane invention. I confess I have heard it often noted, that the difference between *Independents and others*, is not so much as to maintain an irreconcilable distance; and I say so too: I could wish they were more friendly united: As to the single point of *Discipline*, they shall have my consent for a brotherly toleration of its exercise, till they are weary of it: But as for their separation *from the Churches of Jesus Christ*, *self-congregation into a Church*, and *seclusion of baptized souls*, from sacred Ordinances, and the like, they seem to me so *repugnant to truth and order*; and *ruinous to Gods Church and Ordinances*, that I cannot without sin, but stand a professed enemy thereunto. Let not men think that I *allow the prophaneness of Christians*, because I *alledge* their interest in the common administration of the Covenant; or that I think their enjoyment may not be interrupted, because I cannot consent their interest be denied them: I have learned to distinguish between *right and possession*; and
where

where the one is clear, the other may be justly sometimes with-held: I well know prophane Christians are *unseemly Saints*, yet *Saints*; *scandalous Disciples*, yet *Disciples*; *disorderly Brethren*, yet *Brethren*; *vessels of dishonour*, yet *Vessels in the same house to the Masters use*. That Church members be for a time suspended from particular priviledges, may be admitted; but to private brethrens pleasure to be *sleighted as no members*, is not to be endured: That obstinate incurable members be cut off, is the *Church her duty*; but that the Church be *cast off*, is the *congregational impiety*? Is there *baptized persons*, in works denying the God they profess? Is there a *brother* a drunkard, an adulterer, and the like? Doth not, Baptism appropriate them to the private admonition of particular brethren, and publique inspection of Church Officers? *Is not the delivering them to Satan, for the buffeting of the flesh, that the soul may be saved*, their priviledge by baptism? If these holy men would talk of *correcting*, *casting out*, *cutting off* disorderly baptized souls; it would sound well in my ears; but to talk of *gathering Churches*, *coming into Church-way*, *admission of Members*, and the like, amongst those that bears holiness in their flesh, and have on them the qualification of access to God, sounds so harshly in my ears, that I cannot but abhor it, as *inconsistent with the nature of Baptism*, exposing it to contempt, making it of no effect, endangering the *subversion of the Church*, and the ushering in of *Paganism*; whilst the baptized find themselves rejected, and not looked after, as of any relation to God; they cannot but resign up themselves to their own lusts, and run into an ignorance

of, and estrangedness to God. It seems to me a most just Plea, that is made by Christians in common; *Were we baptized? why are we disowned, as to relation to God and his Church, and cast out of all the care of the Church, as if we were thereunto strangers? If the Seal of God be on us, why do our brethren lift up themselves above us, and engross to themselves the titles, terms, priviledges, that belong in common to all baptized souls? If we walk worthy our relation, we are willing to be corrected; but must we needs lose our interest and be thrust out of our fathers inheritance by our brethren, our forfeiture never being judicially exacted? Gods Ordinances we could bear though never so cross to our nature, because thereunto we are bound by our Baptism; but the new ways pursued by our brethren, and to us proposed, are grievous to us, because we find them not in the grand Charter of our priviledge; willingly we would walk with God in duty, and draw nigh to him in the Assemblies of his people, for that we are thereunto consecrated; but herein we are deburred; and driven at a distance, as if Dogs, not Children; Heathens, not Christians; Aliens to the Covenant, not Heirs of Grace. If we go astray, we think those that are set over ought to seek us as Sheep, not suffer us to wander as Goats. We have cause to complain, that our Shepherds feed themselves, not the Flack; they feed upon the flock, and cloth them with the wool: kill the fat, but feed not the sheep: The weak they have nor strengthened, the sick they have not healed, not have they sought that which was lost, nor brought again, that which was driven away; but with cruelty and rigor have they ruled us: We were scattered without a Shepherd; and when*

we were dispersed; every beast of the field devoured us: We were sheep; though wandring upon every high hill and mountain; Gods Flock, though scattered through the earth, and none sought after us. If the Lord Jesus subscribe and accept not this complaint as just and good, I know nothing of Gospel method or order.

Thus then I have noted the *vanity and vileness* of those, whose carriage contradicts the nature of Baptism, and bespeaks them *insensible of it*, as an especial qualification for confidence in access to God in the Assemblies of his people.

The third and last Use of this Doctrine, is by way of *Exhortation* unto two especial duties.

First, Acquaint we our selves with the holy nature of Baptism.

Secondly, Act we the course of our lives and carriage, as those whose bodies are washed with pure water.

Of these give me leave to speak a word in their order, and first of the first.

Acquaint we our selves with the holy nature of baptism; Understand its end, use, and effects: Labour we to know the holiness it stampson any; the priviledges it confers; and how it confers them; see we the divine institution enforcing the duty of subjection to it, and the dignity received by it. Ignorance is the Nursery of Error, and Guard of all Prophaneness: All those ordinances degrading, and vilifying notions that are conceived in mens minds, all those blasphemies belched out of their mouths, and all that contemptible carriage under and towards baptism and the baptized, which we have before taxed, are no other then the mists and filthy fogs of a blind mind,

mind, to be dispersed by a right apprehension of the holy nature thereof: Ignorance is noted in Scripture as the ground of *Israels* impiety: very often doth God complain, *they know not me and are a people who wil not understand; my people perish for lack of knowledge?* Knowledge is the propounded cure of all prophaneſs and contempt of holy things: it is the principle of Regeneration *to be renewed in the ſpirit of the minde.* Our Saviour corrects the prophaneſs of the Temple by an, *it is written, my houſe ſhall be called, an houſe of prayer;* and diſpels all rude traditions, which made the Law of God of none effect, by an *expoſition of the Law:* And the Apoſtle corrects the prophane uſe of the Lords Supper, by explaining the nature, form, and uſe thereof, telling them ſometime *this is not to eat the Lords Supper;* and other times pointing to the Ordinance, by a, *The Cup of bleſſing which we bleſs, is the Communion;* and an, *I received from the Lord, what I delivered unto you.* The ſame is to be the cure of the prophaneſs of every Ordinance of God, (*viz.*) the underſtanding of its uſe and nature. They that know not the benefit of a Deniſon of *England*, or a Freeman of *London*, muſt needs diſeſteem, diſregard, and deſpiſe the priviledges thereof. Is it any marvel to hear men ſpeak, and ſee men carry contemptibly towards a ſealed parchment, whoſe uſe and nature he doth not underſtand? but ſuch as know thereof the uſe and value, will purchaſe them at a dear rate, and priſe them above many things ſimply, and in themſelves more conſiderable. In a word, I muſt ſay, if men knew that Gods *image and authority* was ſet on Baptiſm, they would not dare to diſpiſe its *ſimplicity and meaneſs:* If they under-

understood it to be the *door of admission into the Church, incorporation into Christs body, and method of matriculation into the household of Faith*, they could never scorn it, or sit indifferent to it; but must see, as ever they will *put on Christ Jesus*, and be united to *his body*, they must be baptized; nay further, such as are sensibly affected with it as a *Seal of the Covenant of grace, and so ground of faith*, as a sacred *qualification of approach to God*, without which we may not come nigh unto him; and as the ordained *Ark of Salvation*, whereby we stand separated from the world unto so great advantages; he could not but set on it an high esteem, rejoicing in his *baptism*, blessing God for such distinguishing grace, and thankfully improve the same to his encouragement in, and engagement unto duty. Let it therefore be your care with all diligence, to study the nature of the Ordinance, and understand its use, vertue and value; that by ignorance you lose not its effects, or be led into erroneous notions, luke-warm affections to, and prophane expressions towards so holy and necessary an Ordinance.

The second Exhortation is, *To all our conversation, as sensible, that the body washed with pure water, must qualify us with confidence in access to God.* Let your knowledge of the right use and nature of Baptism appear in your lives and carriage under, and towards so holy an Ordinance: Take heed of prophaning holy things, disesteeming high priviledges, and contemning special grounds of faith and priviledges of grace: and more particularly,

1. Direct. *Admit not men into communion with the Church in other Ordinances and acts of worship, that have not been baptized.* Let them enter at the right door, that receive Gods alms: Call not them the Lords people, who wear not the Lords livery: communicate not the priviledges of the Saints, with them who stand Aliens and Strangers to the Common-wealth of Israel: Let not them approach the presence of an holy God, who were never sanctified by the washing of water by the word: And in a word, take heed of running into the abomination of bringing into Gods Sanctuary, the *unbaptized in flesh*: Invert not Gods order and the Gospel method of approach to God. These might have seemed needles exhortations heretofore, but now do not; for that many in the midst of us do not onely disown their own baptism, but their Issue unbaptized; And great is the present, and greater will be the future danger of admitting to sit at the Lords Table, such as *never were baptized*: I could heartily wish we could keep a Register of the *unbaptized*, as we do of the *baptized*: However, let the admicistrators of holy things, make it their first enquiry, *Were you baptized?* and take heed they pollute not Gods Sanctuarie, by admitting thereunto the men whose *bodies were not washed with pure water*: Be not deceived with a pretence of *reall grace*; for *grace* must needs be pretended, where any of Gods Ordinances are despised, and Christs prescribed order is neglected; but if it were *reall*, it is not the Churches guide, who cannot know it: Outward qualifications must be their direction, and Gospel order in peoples approach to God, is their charge and must be their care.

2. Direct. *Attend with reverence and affection, the administration of Baptisme unto others.* Turn not your backs on so holy an Ordinance and eminent action; but consider it is an *act of worship, and Ordinance of God*, as well as preaching or prayer; and our attendance on all acts of Religion, is duty; it is a *solemn and sacred action*, separating persons unto God, *sanctifying them for God, stamping upon men holiness to the Lord, setting them as members of the Church, the body of Christ*; and *solemnly dedicating them to the service of Father, Son, and holy Ghost.* And doth not this call for the attendance of all the Lords people? Shall not the worth of union with Christs Church, and consecration to God, be witnessed to be of weight by the reverent attendance of the Assemblie? Are not all concerned in, and to be edified by the Ordinance, and shall they sleight it, and turn back on it? Consider the reproof of the guilt of such neglect: let it quicken you to duty: let your presence at, and reverence in the administration of Baptisme, bespeak your sense of its sacred nature and sanctifying use; making a Church Ordinance private by confining it to your houses, or running from its administration in the publique place, must needs be the result of low thoughts. *Clandestine baptism, is the cloud of Baptism*; and the rude out-running that Ordinance, runs it into contempt; be witnesses of their *incorporation* with whom you must live in communion in Gods Ordinances.

3. Direction. *Argue your Baptism to your engagement to, and encouragement in drawing nigh to God.* Your bodies are washed with pure water, provoke

your spirits to draw nigh in the assurance of faith : Consider that by your baptisme, you are *singled out of the world*, and set in a capacity of Salvation: You are *placed in the Ark*; will you periw in the common deluge of mankind? You *sanctified unto God by the washing of water*; will you stand at a distance from God, as strangers to him? You are in the order of his own appointment, *suited for divine society*; will you live as without God, without hope in the world? You are the *sealed Sons and subjects of the Covenant*; and will you pass away your time as Bankrupts, that possess nothing? You have *put on Jesus Christ his livery*; will you not do him homage with all chearfull loyalty? You are *entred into the houshold of faith and Church of God*; shall not their communion be to you comfortable? Is not Baptism a *ground of faith and encouragement*; twhy are you then so dispondent in appearing before God? Is it not your *solemn Bond unto divine service*; why are you then so dull and backward unto duty? Was your Baptism a *meer complement*, that you doe not mind it or make use of it now it is past? Is it not a *moral instrument* to be improved by meditation, affording matter of *consel and comfort*? Nay is it not *Gods Ordinance, a ground of faith, pledge of love, badge of relation*, to be argued into the awe and encouragement of our access to God? Is not Baptism an *initiating seal*: assuring us of initiating graces? hath it not *planted us into the Olive*, that we might extract sap and juyce to the bringing forth fruits of Righteousnesse? In a word, Baptism is greatly advantageous to *hope and holiness*, if but duly improved by *acts of Faith*. We find no profit in it, because we look for none from

from it. If right assured, be never claimed, how shall it be possessed? If sin-mortifying engines be never used, sin must needs have dominion over the soul: I would to God, I could but perswade Christians to sit down, and seriously contemplate their *Baptism* in order to their holiness, and thus reflect it. I am baptized: Surely then I am under some more than ordinary engagement: Therereby I was washed from old sins; shall I then live in them, or so far forget my self, as not to let vertue, knowledge, temperance, brotherly kindnesse, patience, godliness, all the graces of God to abound in me? Is not *Baptism* the dew of Heaven, that waters the Garden of God? Hath it been distilled on me, and shall I be found idle and unfruitfull, 2 Pet. 1. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. I have been baptized into the death of Christ, buried with him in Baptisme, planted into the similitude of his death, that my old man might be crucified, and the body of sin destroyed, that I should not serve sin; but as he was raised up from the dead, I should walk in newness of life: and shall sin reign in my mortal body that I should obey the lusts thereof; or shall I give my members as weapons of unrighteousness unto sin. Rom. 6. I have by *Baptisme*, been consecrated unto God; and shall I not come nigh him in duty? I am incorporated into the Church; ought I not then to be conversant in the Assembly of the first born? I have stricken Covenant with God; will not my neglect of duty, and course of impiety be charged on me, as the breach of the oath of God? All the promises of grace are to me sealed; shall not I then cleanse my self from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness? In a word, *Baptism* is the seal of the Covenant

set in my flesh, *and the causing me to see the evil of my ways and doings, and to be ashamed and forsake them; the taking away the stony heart, and giving an heart of flesh; the putting Gods Spirit within me, that I may walk in his ways, are the promises of the Covenant; why then do not graceless I claim them, and by prayer plead my baptism for the obtainment of them? For he is faithful that hath promised, but will not perform, until they be asked in faith:* And as our baptism is thus a moral argument of holiness to our selves, it is the more helpful hereunto, because it answers all temptations unto sin. When we are assaulted with the pollutions that are in the world through lust, we may answer, *we are washed with pure water, and may not be again defiled: The cogency of custom must give place to the Covenant we have made in baptism: The violent temptations of Satan recoil upon the returns of baptism: I am baptized, silenceth all suggestions to sin: I am baptized into the Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is the onely Spel (to speak with reverence) that charms the Devil. For it imports thus much: Shall the Children of God converse with his Enemies? the confederates of God break his commands? the separated out of the world, be subject to the Prince of the World? Or doth malicious Satan think the sealed of the Lord, shall be so much sleighted by their Lord, as to be taken captive at his will? Oh! play the man in a rational management of your baptism, it will much advance your Christianity all your days.*

As Baptism is *an help* to holiness, so also *to hope*; to be improved by due Acts of faith; as it is an Ordinance of God, for our encouragement in access to him: many souls stand at a distance from divine Ordinances; or draw nigh with much trembling, which would be dispelled by due apprehensions of Baptism: Let such therefore consider, that under the want of special, they ought to rejoyce in general expressions of Gods love, and arguments of *hope*; and immediate assurances of divine favour are not to be expected, whilst we have mediate Ordinances on which to act our Faith: *Our hope* must come into the soul in the same way, *with holiness*, by a moral improvement of Gods Grace, in his Ordinances to us extended; let therefore the desponding Christian, that trembles to converse with Gods people, to come nigh Gods Table, or claim any of Gods promises, sit down and seriously discourse his Baptism. *I am Baptized; was this an empty Ordinance? Shall my unbeleiving heart imagine any divine institution to be empty and in vain imposed? No, All the ways of God are truth, he never subjected souls to any falacy, nor can do: Why then art thou so sad O my soul? trust still in God in him will I hope, for he hath established a Covenant of peace extended to my Parents, and through them to me, and set the Seal thereof, Baptism, in my flesh; and is not Baptism a pledge of his affection to me, a badge of my relation to him? Why then do I say he knows me not, or I belong not to him? Do all the Sons of Adam wear this livery? Is there a speciality in the application of water; and hath it not extended to me? Shall I say I have received no favour peculiar to*

to the Lords people, and distinct from the mass of mankind? Nay, I am by baptism a matriculate Disciple in Christ his School, an incorporated Member of the household of Faith? Why then do I fear to feed on childrens bread? and to use thou priviledges that do belong to the Citizens of the New Jerusalem? Why am I as an alien and stranger from the common wealth of Israel? I have by Baptism put on Jesus Christ, and shall I fear to come before the Father? is not he his beloved Son in whom he is well pleased? Is not Baptism a Seal of Gods Covenant? why then do I not claim the promises? What though I see not Gods privy Seal, the Spirit of adoption; is the broad Seal of the Covenant of no force and value; doth it in vain bear on it divine authority? why then is it called the Ark of Salvation? why hath God said, he that be- lieveth and is baptized, shall be saved? Shall I lose my salvation, for not joyning faith to my baptism? What though I find many rude Christians and prophane persons in the Church claiming priviledges by their Baptism; can I deny in some things their claim to be good, though they be wicked? And wherein it is not good to them, breaking the Covenant, may it not be good to me, poor me, that desire to keep the covenant of my God? In a word, hath not God sanctified me to himself, by the washing of water; and doth he not call men, to draw nigh to him in assurance of faith, having the body washed with pure water, and shall I be dismayed in access to him? Oh! the wickedness of my doubting, that doth spring from ignorance of Gods holy Ordinances! the sin of my despondency, that deters me from duty, and exposeth my baptism to contempt? I will sure cast off this estate, and hence-
for-

*forward continue with the Church in the Word, break-
of bread, and prayer, and use of all other privi-
ledges of grace; and composedly prize the benefit of
Ordinances, that by rational acts of faith in them, I
may at length arrive at the fulness of assurance:* Thus
then Christians argue to your selves, the duty and
dignity of your baptism, enjoy with comfort the
priviledges thereby conferred: Know and approve
your selves as baptised: and thereby

*Singled out of the World by Baptism, and set in a
capacity of Salvation, as was Noahs family in the Ark,
1 Pet. 3. 21.*

*Sanctified unto God, Baptism being the so-
lemn form of consecration, Eph. 5. 26.*

*Sons and Subjects of the covenant, invested with
Christ, incorporated into his Church, the seal of which
is in your flesh by baptism.*

*Suited for divine Society, by the expiation of
guilt, extirpation of sins power, and exact confe-
deration with God; all which the Scriptures note,
to be the effect of Baptism, or the washing of the
body with pur water.*

In the apprehension and argumentation of these
priviledges, let me guide your judgements by pro-
pounding to your consideration, these several rules
of Caution.

I. Rule. *Salvation and Sanctification, and the like
priviledges, are naturally argued from Baptism, as it
is an Ordinance of God ordained to that end.* There-
fore the effects are to it attributed: It in all things
necessary bears an analogy with Circumcision, and
propounds moral considerations to that end, to the
reaso-

reasonable soul of man, to be argued by contemplative acts of faith.

2. Rule. *All that will be sanctified, saved, and enjoy the before noted priviledges, must be baptized.* All that will in any ordinary way possess them (for extraordinary providences are beyond the reach of our debate) must be baptized: not onely on the necessity of a command from God, but the nature of the Ordinance, being the means appointed, rightly constituted, and readily conclusive to such an end: So that none *unbaptized*, can on any ground expect to enjoy, nor may warrantably be admitted to the priviledges of a sanctified and saved people of the Lord.

3. Rule. *Some baptized, enjoy these priviledges of salvation, sanctification, and the like, visibly and symbolically; others, really, sincerely, and savingly.* Some are *seemingly* saved and sanctified in the sight of men and esteem of the Church: These enjoy the outward Ordinance only, and that is the guide and ground of humane censure, and the judgement of the Church: Hence the term *Saint, Believer, Disciple, Brother*, is in Scripture given, and must be by the Church yeilded to *Hypocrites*; yea, to visible prophane persons, but *baptized*: but others are sincerely and *savingly* possessed of these priviledges, not onely in the judgement of the Church, but by the Testimony of their own conscience and spirit of adoption. These enjoy not onely the outward sign, but also the inward grace of baptism; have not only the *body washed with pure water*, but also the *heart sprinkled*

spinkled from an evil conscience : The outward Ordinance and inward grace are sometimes divided, according to the visible and invisible ministration of the Covenant : Baptism is to all, the same in its nature, but not in its effects : it is in it self efficacious to all, but in some, not meeting with due capacity, acts of faith, to improve it, it becomes not effectual. Many baptized, and by the Church called *heirs of glory*, lose their hopes, holiness, and heaven it self; not because Baptism did not seal it, and confer a ground or right, but because the soul acted not faith in the right unto the claim of what was conferred : None so deservedly lose their inheritance as those who improve not their sealed evidence to a due claim, Take heed lest there be among you a prophane *Esau*, heirs of his Fathers blessing, who for a mess of Pottage sold his birth-right. Men in the Church contented with Creature-comforts, claim not the priviledges of the Covenant conferred by their Baptism, and so lose their birth-right.

4. Rule. The outward priviledges of Baptism enjoyed visibly and in the judgement of the Church, may be forfeited, and by the censures of the Church taken away. A brother may be made as a *Publican and Heathen*; a member of Christs body may be cut off; and a Servant of God may be delivered unto Satan; the Citizens of *Jerusalem* may be disfranchised: private persons may not at pleasure disown baptized souls; but the publique censures of the Church, if unworthy their received Baptism, may discharge them Church communion, and divest them of salvation,

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tion, sanctification, interest in the Covenant, which *clave non errante*, the Church not erring, is ratified in Heaven, as well as in the Church visible upon earth.

5. Rule. *Salvation, Sanctification, and the privileges of the Covenant, may by Baptism be conferred on them who are not sensible of the Ordinance, or in a present capacity of using them.* Right may be formally conferred, where it is not presently acted. The King may be crowned in the Cradle, the crown be set on his head as token of right, before his hand can hold the Scepter. Present incapacity of use is no bar to the laying the foundation of a future claim. Many men at years, must review the Decrees concerning their estates, which were sealed in Infancy: Infants may have their Baptism as soon as born, whereby they must claim the Covenant, when they come to years of capacity.

6. Rule. *The baptized, not arguing joy and duty from their baptism, do against the nature of the ordinance: and either disown its institution to that end, or deny its efficacy thereunto, and disesteem its specialty, as related to the Covenant and people of God: Therefore deliver we our selves from sin, and let us carefully improve our baptism as the qualification that fits us for a confidence in approach to God.*

The fourth direction or exhortation, is to Parents, Christian Parents. *With ardent care and affection,*

*fection, present your Infants unto baptisme, and instruct them in their baptismal priviledge. Your children may, nay must, by your care, come nigh to God. Let them then be consecrated ; they are as your natural issue, an holy seed begotten to the Lord : Holy in the esteem of the Church, and extent of the Covenant ; partakers of the fatness of the Olives ; Heirs of the promise of Remission and Salvation ; children of the Covenant ; bearing Christ his Name, as his Disciples to be received, not offended, as we have before proved, And shall not they come nigh to God, enter into his Sanctuary, be joyned to the assemblies of his people ? Hath not Christ said to the rebukers of such approach, *suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for such are of the kingdome of heaven,* and capable of my blessing ? and shall not then Infants be admitted members of Christ his body, and have the seal of the Covenant set in their flesh, and holiness stamped on them ? Shall they not be consecrated to the Lord : hath not the Lord appointed the same sanctifying Ordinance to *root and branches* ? and will you not with care and affection pursue it ? Shall God give your children *covenant interest*, and shall not your paternal care provide for the confirmation of it, by the seal of which they are capable ? Would you not affectionately contend for their interest in a *worldly estate* ? neglect it not in an *heavenly* : but when God gives you children, be carefull with all convenient speed, to give them back again to God : When you have brought forth *heirs of the Covenant*, with due reverence bring them to Gods Church, to be inrolled, and have their interest sealed by Baptisme : Provoke not God to meet with you,*

as with *Moses*, for your neglect of sanctifying your seed by his holy Ordinances : Let not your children have cause to curse and complain of your neglect of their baptism. Let not your affection to your Infants baptism be cooled, or care for it be checked by the foolish exceptions of their adversaries, whilst you see their interest is cleer. What if it be objected, that all the arguments for their Baptisme is by way of inference and consequence ? Is not Scripture consequence, Gods word binding conscience, produced by our Saviour as a ground of faith, to prove the Resurrection and his own sufferings ? Is it a sufficient warrant of womens receiving the Lords Supper, and will it not prove Infants right to Baptisme ? and direct the subjects to whom a sacred Ordinance must be applied ? I have before evidenced Infants right to *Baptisme*, and given sufficient answer to the objections urged against it : I would now engage you Parents to make conscience of your duty to *baptize* your children : Contract not on your selves the guilt of the sacrilege before noted ; and the more to encourage you hereunto, let me shew you some of those many advantages that attend the *infant season of Baptism*, wherein it is to be preferred before *baptism at grown years* : Reverend Mr. *Forde*, in his practicall use of Infant-Baptisme, hath very affectionately enforced this argument, and shewed many benefits ; I refer you serionlsly to read them And for your present help, let me wish you to consider, that *Infant Baptism* confers on us these several priviledges, which adult Baptisme leave us without.

1. Infant Baptisme expresseth sins nature.

2. Explaineth the benefit of Relation, and the method

method of the Covenant, and eminently dignifyeth the children of such parents.

3. Enlargeth and establisheth the Church.
4. Exciteth Repentance.
5. Enforceth Faith.
6. Engageth duty.
7. Encourageth unto death.

None of these do so naturally flow from the baptisme of men of grown years, as we shall plainly see by a particular consideration of them.

The first benefit by Infant Baptisme is, That it *expresseth the sin of nature, and engageth against it.* Baptism doth it self declare sin to be *defiling*, but the *spreading property* thereof is evidenced by *Infant Baptism*. They that are *washed*, must needs witness they were *unclean*; but *their early Baptisme*, must needs note their uncleanness is in *their nature*, not in their persons; for poor Babes, they have acted neither good nor evil: That Babes must bear the pain of Circumcision bespeaks a foreskin upon their heart, that makes them prophane to God. The Baptism of men at years, doth indeed minde them that they are *filthy*, but that is a filthiness of their person, evidencing that they having committed many actual corruptions, that appears to them: but that they are *transgressors from the womb, conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity, of a prophane lump, and polluted in their very being*; it no way at all convinceth; no, that is the language of the *baptized* before actual sin. The *baptisme* and *burial* of our babes, hath ever been in the Church of God, two unanswerable arguments against the *Pelagian* fancie, that *children have no inbred corruption, but sin by imitation*: If we give
away

away the first, it is just God should take away the second, by giving us barren wombs, Infants Baptisme was urged by *Austin* against *Pelagius*, to the puzzling of him in his denyal of original sin: yet he never denied them to be baptized; which had been a ready answer; nor was he ever able to withstand the consequence: For if baptized before *polluted in person*, they must needs be *unclean in nature*; before *actuell sin* pass from them, *original sin* must needs be upon them, before they are capable of any *imitation*, then they must needs be the subjects of *imbred corruption*: For Baptisme cannot be denied to be Gods Ordinance of *Remission and Regeneration*; and further, this evidence of hereditarie sin must needs engage *hereditarie enmity*, and so irreconcilable hatred, much more violent and implacable than that which is *personal*, being inforced by the antiquity of the quarrel: it runs in a blood, and passeth from parents to children I have observed a great aptitude in the enemies of Infants Baptisme, to embrace the Arminian fancies, and deny all *original sin*: And it is no marvel, whilst their principles are so neer of kin; one Error will easily ingender another. As ever you will make visible the *sin of nature*, baptize your babes before they be stained with *actuell guilt*.

The second Benefit of Infant Baptisme is, That it *explaineth the benefit of Relation, and the method of transmitting the Covenant of Grace*. Baptisme, as a seal of the Covenant, sheweth interest in the Covenant, and the benefit of *personal qualification* that fits for it; but it is the *Infant season*, that sheweth that God hath wisely ordered *Grace to run in natures channel*; and *parental relation*, under such

a qualification as *Beleiving*, to engender a propriety to baptism. He that first receives the Patent of honour, can discern no benefit of *relation*; save what is future; and if this patent be onely personal, he seeth none at all: but *hereditary honours* are demonstrations of *relation* and its advantage; hereby a man knows what his benefit is, in being the *Child of a Baron or Earl*, rather then of a *common Knight or Gentleman*: Baptism applyed to men of years, doth indeed demonstrate a *Covenant of grace* granted on good behaviour unto every individual person; but wholly obliterate the *seeds* interest and extent of the *Covenant* unto natural *issue*, in order to their good behaviour; It declareth expresly, that as to the *speciality* of Gods grace, *relation to beleiving Parents, is no priviledge*: As good be the child of *Ammon*, as of *Abraham*; of a Pagan as a Christian: which is clearly contrary to the tenure of the *Covenant*, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed*: *The promise is to you and your Children*: and the ground of applying the initiating seal, is relation to such Parents. Therefore every man child at eight days old, shall be circumcised, that thereby it may appear, the order of my *Covenant* is, to *beleiving Parents*, and their seed, and the benefit of relation to such Children shall be, that *I will be their God*. Relation to the Olive, is the reason of the branches fatness: The Jews relation to their pious progenitors, is the onely remaining hope of their conversion, they are beloved of God, *according to election, for the fathers sake*, Rom. ix. 28. If we will maintain the knowledge of *relative advantages in the Covenant of Grace*, carefully baptize we our babes in their

Infancy,

Infancy, as the plainest comment thereon: so when they shall consider themselves to have been sealed and sanctified to God, before they had in themselves the least of personal qualification; they will bless God for the *Covenant of their fathers*, and the *extent of it to the seed of believers*, and giving them to be born of such favourites to Heaven: the great assertors of the Baptism of grown persons, to defend their notion, do in the ministration of grace, darken all relation, and disfranchise all posterity, interpreting the clear text of Scripture, *The promise is to you and your Children*, by a personal qualification, when *God shall call them*; as if the Holy Ghost had spoken nonsense, and used a term of relation in vain, and to no purpose: But certainly when God established a Covenant of Grace, he did not invert nature's course, but provided relation to the privileged thereof in his Church, as well as other advantages in the world; nor did he in the least, intend Religion to be an abridgement of parental right, and power of dedication of their seed to the service of their God, as well as designation to any worldly trade: and therefore he appointed a seal of his Covenant, and sacred Bond to his own service, whereby subjects meerly passive (as was before noted) might be at the pleasure of Parents to him presented: And hereof *Infant Baptism*, is the onely visible evidence in the whole World: *Root and Branches, Parents and children*, are always homogeneal: Nature makes all relations to be of the same kind; and Grace, not inverting Nature's order, will have the children, by the dignity of a sacred Ordinance, to be declared of the holy kind, with their Parents, and by

by this religious badge of Baptisme, be distinguished from other Children of Turks, Jews, and Pagans, who like their Parents, remain prophane and estranged unto God : And thus Infant Baptisme, doth not only evidence *relation* and its benefit, the method and order of the Covenant to *men within, but also to men without the Church*, that it may be to them an encouragement to lay hold on the Covenant of God, for that they do not only provide for their own *personal term*, but see Grace also *extended to their issue*, on the very ground of *relation natural* unto them, under a Christian qualification. And this is especially profitable to the Jew, who having had the Covenant of God to themselves and *seed natural, as their seed*, and that witnessed by the initiating seal of *Circumcision, set in the flesh of their children*, must needs stumble at the new Covenant, if it exclude their issue, as hath been before noted : So that the Infant-Baptisme, so clearly witnessing the order of the Covenant, and benefit of relation to beleiving Parents, to the *comfort* of men within the Church, and *encouragement* of men without the Church, it must needs be more profitable than the Baptisme at grown years, which *curtails the Covenant, cuts off posterity, casts out of the Church, all relation natural*, and maketh all ministrations of Grace to be *meerly personal*.

The third benefit of Infant-Baptism is That it *enlargeth the bounds, and establisheth the being of the Church of God* ; but the baptisme of grown men doth much confine the borders, and hazard the being of the Church. Infant-Baptism doth enlarge the Church by the spreading of it through whole *Families, Countries and Nations* ; persons are private and perishing but posterity is publique and flourishing.

ing; *holy seed* is the Churches nurserie, whilest *grown trees* are fading; *Lambs* are the increase of Christs Fold, when *old sheep* are few and dying; and *succession* is the surest title and strongest ground of claim: when from generation to generation the Church of God is continued in a constant Race, from Father to Son, it is much established against hellish opposition. Nature hath made all living Creatures, *seminal* that that they might multiply and continue: the course of providence is the same to the Church that it is to the World: certainly the only wise God well knew the best way to enlarge and establish his own kingdome upon Earth; and he, though he founded his Church in an *old stock*, yet ordered the spreading of it by *natural branches*, and preservation of it by *posterity*: The method of God must needs be the same in the maintenance of his Church under the *new*, as it was under the *old Testament*, and he that takes up his Church from one Nation, on designe to extend it through all the nations of the World, would never plant it only in *personal, perishing plants*; but provide for their scattering an *holy-seed*, for its increase and succession. The promise of the Churches increase in Gospel times, it noted to be *by children*; the promise is expresse, *I will lift up my Standard to the Gentiles, and they shall bring thy sons in their armes, and thy daughters on their shoulders, Isa. 49. 22.* Our own observation must needs witness the the bounds of the Church is much enlarged by *Infant Baptisme*: more are ingaged to God by an early incorporation to his Church, then their own *personal choice*: for where we see one man take up Christianity so much as to the profession of it, on terms of choice,

choice, we see hundreds engaged therein by *parental profession*, and *baptismal obligation* in their infancy ; if an essay hereof were made in *America*, how small would be the number of them that should own God and Christ, by being baptized in grown yeers ; and how numerous would they be, by a timely dedication to God, and incorporation to the Church by *Infant Baptisme* ? And again how many generations, each after other, hath succeeded in the Churches of God in our Nation ; but how soon will they be extinct, this Orchard be overspread with the weeds of Atheism and Heathenism, if Anabaptists Parents do proceed to *break off their branches from the Olive*, and the line of the Covenant from their *Posterity* ?

The fourth benefit of Infant-Baptisme, *It excitet*h *Repentance*. Baptisme in it self is hereunto an argument, but it is more enforced from the season of *Infancy* than grown age ; humiliation for past guilt, and future caution against sin are much enforced by the *season of our Baptisme*, and that by pointing out unto us the *inclination of our nature*, and the *kindnesse of our God*, both which meeting with an ingenuous spirit, are very moving and melting considerations ; That we are *washed in water*, doth witnesse we are *unclean* ; but in that we are washed in this *Infant season*, before stained with the least actual sin and personal corruption, must needs witness, that *in the day of our nativity our Father was an Amorite, our mother an Hittite : we were polluted in our blood, our navel not cut ; we were not washed, nor salted ; no eye pitied us, but we were cast out to the loathing of our persons*. If Baptisme be an Ordinance of Remission and Regeneration,

ration it must needs remember in its *infant subjects*, that in their nature there is *guilt* to be bewailed and pardoned, *a foreskin* to be violently cut off; *a pravity* unto evil, to be slain; *an old man*, to be crucified with Christ; *a corrupt nature*, to be watched against with all care and caution, and that not acquired by any *personal act or custome* of our own, as Baptisme at age imports; but (the more cutting it is to consider) it is *imbred in nature*, hereditarie to our being, and therefore will easily act in us, more closely adhere to us, and doth call for more care to keep it under: true repentance always reflects on the root of sin, *in iniquity was I conceived, and in sin did my mother bring me forth*, is the first complaint of penitive David, and hereunto Infant-Baptisme doth plainly point us.

This season of our Baptisme, doth not only acquaint us with our own vile nature, but also *affect us with Gods kindnes*, which will melt the ingenuous soul into mourning and much care, not to offend; for the season of our Baptisme doth shew us *Gods love to us*, as he was the God of *our fathers* and the God of *our youth*, and both of them are exceeding aggravations of guilt: God often doth charge the sin of *Israel* under the notion of *forsaking the God of their fathers*; and the pious in Scripture, did much enforce their humiliation, by the kindneses God did shew *their fathers*: And if we consider our selves sealed in *infancy* by Baptisme, we must needs see God was the *God of our fathers*, and struck Covenant with them, and was unto them *gracious*, otherwise we could not have been owned, as *begotten to the Lord* and to be baptized; and therefore the sins we commit,

is against our fathers, friend and God; nay they are against the God of our youth, that owned us in the day of our nativity, and in the loathing of our persons, and said unto us, Live; that took us as his own, sware unto us, and entred into Covenant with us in our very cradle, when we could not choose for ourselves; and set the seal of his Covenant in our flesh, & placed us on the knees of his Church, brought us up at his own cost, and nourished us by his Ordinances, and hath been our God all our dayes: Oh! what aggravations of sin doth this kindness of God afford? How may the Ministers of God speak bitter things against them that dayly break the Covenant of their youth, and deal unfaithfully with the God of their fathers? Me thinks I should hear some pensive soul sitting on its stool of repentance, thus soaking its hard heart in its Infant-baptisme, by such serious contemplations as these. I am baptized: then surely unclean; guilt is on my soul; the body of corruption possesseth me, if I be not pardoned, I perish; if this old man be not buried with Christ in Baptisme I am undone. Must not the water of my baptism, set the pump of my dry heart on running tears of contrition for this defiled estate of my person, of my person. That is not all; I was baptized in infancie; before I was in the least capable of staining my person. Oh wretched man! my very nature is defiled: how can I dream of drawing nigh to God, that am the puddled stream of a polluted fountain? Sin is my natural temper, and guilt the very image of my father: In iniquity I was conceived, and in sin brought forth, how shall I be purged from this natural blemish, or withstand this imbred corruption? How am I necessitated to live in sin, for that it is naturalized to my very being?

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How easily must I needs be drawn to sinfull action, whose very nature is sinful corruption? If ever I obtain pardon for, or power over my sin, it must needs be an act of especial Grace, the benefit of a peculiar Covenant: Sure I am, I can never sufficiently lament this sad estate of my nature. Many are the sinfull action which dayly flow from this bitter root, and they sink my soul into the depth of sorrows, when I seriously consider myself baptized: For hereby I see God, the God of my fathers, and the God of my youth, to have been the object of my offences, against thee, thee only have I offended; thee, the God of my father, to whom thou shewedst favour, and called him out of darkness into thy marvellous light, with whom thou didst establish thy Covenant of Grace, and didst extend it to his seed; and madest me, miserable me, partakers of it, and so becamest my God from my very being; thou sawest me in the day of my nativity, when I lay in my blood in the loathing of my person, thy eye pitied me, thou said'st unto me, Live; thou spakest kindly unto me, swarest to me, and entredst into Covenant with me, and madest me thine own; layedst me in the lap of thy Church, nourishedst me by thine Ordinances: Thou by timely engaging me to thy self, didst prevent my wicked choice and Satan his malicious purpose of possessing me as a vassal of his kingdom; all my days thou hast done me good, yet wretched I, have sinned against such a God; ungrateful I, have been ready to forsake thee, my God, and my fathers God, and have dealt falsely in thy Covenant: It might be just with thee, to deal with me as I have dealt with thee, when I despised the oath in breaking the Covenant; but in thy mercy Lord, I pray thee, Remember thy Covenant thou madest to me in the dayes of my youth, and establish

stablish it for an everlasting Covenant, that I may know the Lord, that I may remember and be ashamed, and never open my mouth any more, because of my shame, when thou art pacified towards me, for all that I have done against the God my father, and the God of my youth: Now will I live in loyalty to so good a God, if thou wilt give me to be sanctified by the blood of sprinkling, and my old man to be crucified by Baptisme, which by thy Grace shall be the awe of my soul, and answer of my heart unto every temptation to sin against thee.

This benefit cannot be effected by adult Baptisme, which affords no such matter of meditation, apprehending the dispensations of God to be only personal, and therefore to be personally improved.

The fifth benefit of Infant-Baptisme is, that it *enforceth faith towards God.* Baptisme as a seal of the promise, pledge of love, and sanctifying Ordinance of God, is a ground of faith pleadable in prayer by all its subjects; but receiveth not a little force from the *season* of its application in *infancie*; whilst it self witnesseth the *Covenant* it seals; the season of its use witnesseth the *extent of the Covenant* to *beleevers and their seed*, and creates a ground on which to claim protection, as well by *early seizure*, as *covenant propriety*, not to note how all the Graces of God, in order to salvation and good things of this life, even *all things pertaining to life and godliness*, are assured to the soul by Baptisme, as the seal of the Covenant. The Parent can with faith thus plead from the season, *Lord, my childe is thine in Covenant, to thee begotten to thee dedicated, by thy seal on his flesh, Oh! wilt thou own him: Remember him; take care of him; establish*

stablish thy Covenant with him; let all the graces of thy promise be performed to him; let not Satan seduce him from thy service, to which he is so soon sealed: How much do I owe to thee, that maketh grace to run through Natures channel, my loins? Lord, let him in time know, and have faith to claim his interest: keep him from the property of prophane Esau, that he despise not his birth-right in thy Covenant, which thou hast sealed to him in the sight of thy people, by his baptism: And as the Parent so the person baptized, acting faith in the Ordinance, doth thus enforce it from his season of enjoyment of it. God is a gracious God, in calling my parents, he had respect unto my good, before I had a being; he graciously established with them a Covenant, which he extended to their seed; I no sooner sprang from the womb, but he owned me as his own, and called me by his name, and set the seal of his Covenant in my flesh: as studious to forestall the choice of my corrupt will (which would never have chosen him) he challenged me, and caused me to be dedicated to his service; as sensible of Satans malice; he made an early seizure of me, and set his mark upon me, and before there was in me the least of act or qualification, he sanctified me to himself by the washing of water: What ever doubts may deter me, I will now draw nigh unto him, and depend upon him; for he that was so soon gracious in extending and sealing to me the Covenant, will faithfully perform it: My condemnation will be most just, if I, having such grounds of faith, should be cut off by reason of unbelief: now I will walk before, and wait upon him; for he will not now forsake me, or suffer Satan to repossess me, and take me out of his house and family.

The sixth Benefit of Infant-Baptisme is, That it engageth more to duty, than adult Baptisme. Herein it is of use of to the Parent and baptized child. How much of argument doth Infant-Baptisme press upon the Parents, to the due instruction and education of his baptized child: Not to speak any thing of the benefit, of catechising it self, the Parent hath reason to reflect the Baptisme of his child in his infant estate, to convince him, That if God hath been so gracious to extend a Covenant of Salvation to his seed; he must have so much grace as to make them know Gods goodness; and understand the extent of the Covenant: If God hath caused their loins to convey grace as well as sin, their care must be that the grace of God be not received in vain: The child's ignorance of interest in conceded honours and priviledges, is the baseness of education, and blot of natural affection: If by their Parental power they have dedicated them to Father, Son, and holy Ghost, it is their part to make them know to what they are devoted. And as it binds the Parents to the duty of education, so the child to carefull observation: Early adoption is the greatest argument of filial observation that can be: the child taken off the Stall, is more bound to the will of Parents, than the man at years adopted to inherit; the one is the object of more pitie, subject of more care, cost and charge, but of lesse service and obedience; therefore bound more to duty than the other: Infant Baptism giveth cause to sing with Israel, He is our God and our fathers God, we will exalt him, Exod. 15. 2. and with David I am thy servant, the son of thy handmaid; I will offer sacrifice and call upon thy name,

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Psal.

Psal. 116. 16, 17. We must not think as *heirs of dignity* to wear Gods livery in our cradles, but must know, it makes us also *heirs of duty*, to yeeld loyalty to him all our dayes. Parental dedication to God, layeth on us the duty of observation: Shall Parents proclaim days of *purim* to be observed in all generations, and posterity dare to pretermitt them? Whether we consider *Gods pitie* or our *Parents power* sparkling in our *Infant-Baptisme*, both impose on us duty; and the nature of our Baptisme (the effect of both) binds us to fight at Gods command under Christ his Banner against every iniquity and vice, to the discharge of every duty of Religion; but neither faith nor obedience can be so enforced by the Baptisme of grown persons, which deny relations natural to be of any use in things of Salvation, and doth greatly darken the method and order of the Covenant of Grace and Salvation.

The seventh and last Benefit of Infant-Baptisme is, That it *encourageth under death*; and that either the *Child or Parents*. We read in primitive times of *Infant Martyrs*, certainly they were thereunto prepared by a knowledge of their interest in the Covenant. In vain should the miserable mother encourage the scourged thirsty child, to remember *the Cup of which Isaac drank*, and *patiently to bear its present torments*, for that it should be *shortly crowned with eternal glory*: if the child at eight years of age had not understood the Covenant of God, and been *catechized in its baptism*: Our Anabaptists will never afford us *babie Martyrs*, that will not allow us *babie Christians*? And as for Parents, if their childrens interest

in the Covenant and right to Baptisme, do not support them under the death of their babes, I (a parent of dead children) do demand, what can? That they are by nature *children of wrath*, must not be denied; that they fall into a *limbus Infantum*, must be denied by all that abhor Poperie: that they are saved there remains no hope, whilest we see them out of the Ark of salvation: What unusual way the Anabaptists run upon for their own comfort, they have not yet declared, nor will Scripture warrant any: Were it not for Infants interest in the Covenant, sealed in their Baptism, I should mourn over my dead children, as without hope.

You see now, that there is not only warrant in Scripture for the Baptism of your Infants, but there is much of profit by it. Whilest others are beating the controversie, do you study the practice of Infant-Baptisme. Let not seducers beguile your simple souls, by pretending Infant-Baptism is *unlawfull*, because *unusefull*: But seeing there is so much profit in the Ordinance, and so much in the season of its application, prize it, pursue it, and preserve it to the Church: Let your children be *baptized* in their infancie, and *catechised* according to their growing capacitie, that through ignorance they may not throw away their birth-right, but may duly know the duty and dignity thereof, and demean themselves as baptized souls.

The fifth and last particular direction or exhortation is to Church-gathering saints, *To admit the baptized into the approaches to God, in the assemblies of his*

people. Make no bar of division to such as bear the badge of union. If Baptism do incorporate into the Church, and consecrate unto God, why doe you deny the relation of the *baptized*, or their fitness for divine service? either deny Baptism to be the *door of admittance* into the Church of Christ, or throw down your *Church Covenant, agreement or experiences of graces*, as to entrance into a Church state. Deny Baptism to be the *Church constituting bond*, or talk not of gathering Churches from among baptized soul: Affect not to your selves the terms and titles of *saints, brethren, beleivers, Church*, and the like, whilest those you despise have as good, nay (by reason of your sinful schism) a better title thereunto then you selves. If Baptisme be the ground of confidence in access to God, who are you that make it void? Is not the straitning of the Church door as dangerous as setting it wide open? Will it not be equally provoking to God to let *dogs* into his house, and to *keep children out*; to pollute his *his holy thing* by the unbaptized, and bar the baptized from *his worship*? If men baptized walk disorderly, endeavor by discipline to reduce them deny not their interest: drive them not from God: make it not your designe to paganize the Christians among whom you dwell, that some few of them may, be brought into your Church way: Weigh well the nature of Baptism, if it do not charge your way with wickednesse, I know not how to judge: If Baptism rightly apprehended, be not the engine to batter Independencie, I dare renounce my skill in militaries. Let not God say, *draw neer in full assurance, having your bodies washed with pure water*; and you say

say to your Baptized Brethren, *stand thou further from me, I am holier than thou.*

Thus then I have noted to you the *nature of Baptism*, the outward Ordinance, and the *duties that flow from its consecrating nature*; which rightly understood, will convince much error, and correct many sinfull practises: Which that it may doe, God, Father, Son, and holy Ghost, in whose holy Name we are baptized, follow it with his blessing. Amen.

Books.



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